Transmitting and Circulating the Late Antique and Byzantine Worlds

Edited by

Mirela Ivanova and Hugh Jeffery

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Transmitting and Circulating the Late Antique and Byzantine Worlds

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Introduction

Mirela Ivanova and Hugh Jeffery

> A Byzanze, la liberté n'est nulle part, le règlement partout. La cité socialiste se trouve ici réalisée, avant Karl Marx, avant Lénine.[1]
>
> In Byzantium liberty was nowhere to be found, and regulation was pervasive. Here the socialist city was brought into being before Karl Marx, before Lenin.

René Guerdan, author of the 1954 *Vie, Grandeurs et Misères de Byzance* from which this quote is extracted, was no great socialist theoretician. Nevertheless, this image of Byzantium, rigid and oppressive, is representative of much twentieth-century scholarship and public opinion. The caricature did not only find expression in analyses of economic history. Orthodox Christianity and the apparent formality of its attendant aesthetics have often served as rhetorical foil against which historians could define the theology and art of the Latin West, most notably according to the art historical paradigms established in the sixteenth century by Giorgio Vasari.[2]

Byzantium as a static, ossified system: over the course of the past two decades this old daemon has been subject to sustained exorcism. The medieval Eastern Roman Empire that has emerged in its place appears evermore dynamic, fluid and, perhaps more controversially, globalised. This transformation has been wrought by numerous scholars and collaborative projects. Not least among these is Averil Cameron's 2014 historiographical essay and call-to-arms *Byzantine Matters*, already a seminal text for younger scholars. Cameron demanded the full re-integration of Byzantium into wider histories of Europe and the Near East.[3] Meanwhile, the Wittgenstein-Prize research

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1   René Guerdan, *Vie, Grandeurs et Misères de Byzance* (Paris, 1954) p. 88.

2   Robert S. Nelson "Byzantine Art in the Italian Renaissance" in *Heaven and Earth: Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections*, eds. Anastasia Dandraki, Demetra Papanikola-Bakirtzi, and Anastasia Tourta (Athens, 2013), pp. 326–336. There have been many historical moments at which the division between Byzantine and Latin Art has been either reconfigured or denied. Byzantine aesthetics appealed to modernist critics desiring to break with Western modes of representation in the early twentieth century; Kostis Kourelis "Byzantium and the Avant-Garde: Excavations at Corinth 1920s–1930s" *Hesperia* 76 (2007), pp. 391–442. The geopolitical alignment of Greece during the Cold War necessitated an attempt to reconcile medieval Greek Art with the Western canon, as is suggested by the title of the Council of Europe Exhibition *Byzantine Art: an European Art*, held in Athens (1964).

3   Averil Cameron, *Byzantine Matters* (Princeton, 2014).

project *Moving Byzantium: Mobility, Microstructures and Personal Agency in Byzantium*, hosted at the Vienna Academy of Sciences since 2015, challenges the caricature from within. Through a vast number of international workshops, conferences, open lectures and publications, the project has highlighted the movement of agents, goods, and ideas within and beyond the borders of the East Roman empire.[4]

One of the stated aims of the *Moving Byzantium* is to highlight "the role of Byzantium as a global culture."[5] This can be located within a broader preoccupation with "globalising" the middle ages, seen in both the 2012 AHRC research network *Defining the Global Middle Ages,* and in volumes such as the network's 2018 publication, *The Global Middle Ages,* and the medieval chapters of *The Prospect of Global History* published in 2014.[6] That Byzantium might be central to this movement was asserted in the title of the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies' 2017 Spring Symposium and its forthcoming publication, *Global Byzantium.*[7]

Despite the recent ubiquity of the term, it is quite apparent that it does not as yet signify a single coherent methodology or agenda. Rather, it manifests as a promotion of a number of pre-existing approaches to historical research. Key among these are comparative history and the history of connectedness.[8] The latter has made the largest mark on scholarship about the Eastern Mediterranean, whether through network studies,[9] trade,[10] or

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4   "Mobility, Microstructures and Personal Agency in Byzantium", https://rapp.univie.ac.at/ (last accessed, January 2019).

5   "Mobility, Microstructures and Personal Agency in Byzantium".

6   "Defining the Global Middle Ages" http://globalmiddleages.history.ox.ac.uk/ (last accessed, April 2018). Catherine Holmes, Naomi Standen, eds. *The Global Middle Ages* (Past and Present Supplement, 13) (Oxford, 2018). James Belich, John Darwin, Margaret Frenz, Chris Wickham, eds. *The Prospect of Global History* (Oxford, 2014).

7   "Global Byzantium, the 50th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies", https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/bomgs/events/2017/global-byzantium.aspx (last accessed, January 2019). Leslie Brubacker, Rebecca Darley, Dan Reynolds eds. *Global Byzantium* (forthcoming).

8   See: Belich et al, *The Prospect,* p. 12 (comparative) p. 14 (connectedness). Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton, 2016), p. 56.

9   Niels Gaul, "All the Emperor's Men (And His Nephews): Paideia and Networking Strategies at the Court of Andronikos II Palaiologos, 1290–1320", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 70 (2016).

10   Dominik Heher, Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, Georgi Simeonov, "Vom Lokalen Zum Globalen. Maritime Netzwerke des Austauschs, der Versorgung und Mobilitat an den byzantinischen Balkanüsten und in der frühmittelalterlichen Welt", Sven Kalmring, Lukas Wether, eds. *Interdisziplinäre Forschungen zu den Häfen von der Römischen Kaiserzeit bis zum Mittelalter in Europa Band 4* (Mainz, 2017), pp. 193–225.

micro-histories of individual agents who traversed the edges of the known world.[11]

The 2017 conference from which this volume has sprung, entitled *Transmitting and Circulating the Late Antique and Byzantine Worlds,* sought to engage critically with a history of connectedness. In particular, it sought to assess whether focusing on global networks, and long-distance contact alone might not in turn lead to the marginalisation of the local and the stabilisation of the regional, and whether prioritising the history of agents or institutions which did traverse great distances might not confine us to a history of elite actors. Thus, as Catherine Holmes and Naomi Standen note in their introduction to *The Global Middle Ages,* we too sought to start from the local and look out, rather than start from a global narrative and look in.[12]

Transmission and circulation are two of the most regularly cited frameworks in which to consider contact or movement. But these terms come with their own conceptual baggage. Historians and archaeologists take transmission to imply movement from a point a to a point b, usually assuming a single bounded thing or idea. Circulation on the other hand implies the potentiality of the eventual return of the object or idea to its original location, thus tends to deal with discrete sets of things (like numismatics, amulets, or pilgrims). All terms relating to change and to movement have the potential to reify or to destabilise their object(s) of enquiry. We hope that this volume achieves more of the latter than the former, though we acknowledge that process of historical description inevitably entails the fixing of certain categories.

One of the appeals of transmission and circulation as concepts is that they speak to both historians and archaeologists, albeit with specific disciplinary nuances. We, as editors of the volume, envisaged it as a platform for interdisciplinary communication, and are pleased to present an evenly balanced set of studies between material and textual cultures. We share the belief that a category difference between text and material is impossible to maintain, and that theoretical insights should be shared and applied between fields.[13]

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11   John-Paul Ghobrial, "The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory", *Past and Present* 222, (2014), pp. 51–93.

12   Holmes, Standen, "Introduction: Towards a Global Middle Ages", p. 23.

13   See: Ian Harder, *Reading the Past, Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology,* (3rd edition, Cambridge, 2003). Umberto Eco, "Function and Sign: The Semiotics of Architecture" in Neil Leach, ed. *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory* (New York, 1997). Antony Eastmond, "Introduction", in *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World* (Cambridge, 2015). Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, Jeffrey F. Hamburger eds., *Sign and Design: Script as Image in Cross-Cultural Perspective,* (Washington DC, 2016).

In addition, it has been our priority to offer contributions of great geographic scope. We have sought to make the so-called "margins" or "peripheries" of the Late Antique and Byzantine worlds the centres of our volume. Only two of our papers deal with Constantinople and its cultural production. Three others deal within Byzantine or at-one-time Byzantine territories. The rest seek to explore regions which the Byzantines themselves may have considered as "τα περατά", the ends of the known world, and the beginnings of the other: the Armenian Caucasus, Islamic Egypt, North Africa, the Levant and the Iranian Plateau, and perhaps less vehemently other, Norman Sicily.

The first section collects a series of case studies into the movements of people and the different kinds of evidence and circumstances which resulted in the circulation of indivduals and groups across the Eastern Mediterranean. Grace Stafford's careful analysis of material and textual evidence on the issue of pilgrimage to Abu Mina persuasively demonstrates that female pilgrims made up a key part of the site's clientele. It also suggests that the vibrancy of the cult-site was sustained not by elite travellers from afar, for whom we have textual records and who often form the basis of global micro-history, but by lower- to middle-class women from nearby localities, most often arriving with particular fertility-related problems.

Julia Burdajewicz's study of travelling painters' workshops in the late antique Levant balances a preoccupation with imperial donations, which demanded exceptional travel across the whole empire, with regionalised travelling workshops and local donors. The largely unpublished, but beautifully decorated basilica and residential complex at Porphyreon offers an excellent case study for skilled painters moving between regional urban centres such as Sidon and Tyre, or along the Levantine road, the *Via Maris*.

Katinka Sewing introduces a new pilgrimage site at the harbour of Late Antique Ephesus. The church, with a sophisticated multi-entry system for the crypt that probably held its holy relics, was built anew amid the city harbour, most likely as a stopover for pilgrims on their way to the city. This decision, Sewing demonstrates, seems to be informed by practice elsewhere in Western Asia minor – Adrianake served as a stopover to venerate Saint Nicholas in Lycia, as Boğsak Adası may well have done for Saint Thecla in Cilicia. It was not just pilgrims who travelled across Western Asia Minor, so too did ideas about the infrastructure and organisation of pilgrimage sites.

Moving westwards, Adele Curness challenges the consensus on how a medieval slave trade ought to operate through an investigation of narratives of abduction, captivity and ransom in Calabrian hagiography. The study emphasises the terror of forced dislocation, but also the procedures through which most captives could hope to return to their homelands across the Straits of Messina.

This was not a unilateral process but a complex system of violence and exchange involving actors on both sides of the religious divide. Nevertheless, it remained a decidedly local phenomenon.

Our second section concerns the transmission of texts and narrative traditions. Here as above, our authors' specific focus tends to reveal the localisation of meaning production, whether in translation, or at court. It opens with Alex MacFarlane's analysis of mythical creatures in the Armenian version of the Alexander Romance. This text was probably translated from the Greek in the fifth century AD and circulated widely in the Armenian-speaking Caucasus. However, MacFarlane highlights the idiosyncrasies and autonomy of the regional tradition. Integral to the Armenian manuscripts are original short poems known as *kafas*. MacFarlane provides new translations for several of these medieval paratexts and demonstrates how they situated the bizarre creatures of the Alexander Romance within an Armenian, Christian cosmos.

Jovana Anđelković discusses the use of ancient rhetorical models in Byzantine literature, offering a detailed analysis of letter 64 of Ioannes Mauropous. The letter was written to the Patriarch in Constantinople from an unhappy Mauropous, exiled to the distant see of Euchaita in north-eastern Asia Minor. She argues that the bishop inverts the rhetorical formulae of a letter of arrival as laid down by the third century BC Menander of Laodikeia. This case study in the playful subversion of genre convention reveals both the transmission of literary traditions from the ancient world and the role of shared literary culture in uniting two Constantinopolitan men separated by political circumstance.

Mathew Barber turns to a single historical event; a short military conflict between Fatimid Egypt and Byzantium state that took place in AD 1054–5 around Latakia and Antioch. Barber uses Arabic accounts of the conflict to explore Egyptian perspectives on frontier interaction and the course of high politics. Through a meticulous analysis of source traditions, he traces the transmission of narratives concerning the internal workings of eleventh-century Byzantine politics among later medieval Egyptian intellectuals, and the limitations and possibilities offered by this closed tradition.

Peter Bara's offering is likewise an exhaustive and illuminating analysis of a brief episode in the Alexiad of Anna Komnene. The princess narrates how the Byzantine general George Palaiologos, unhorsed and about to be slain by Pechenegs at the Battle of Dristra, was rescued by the miraculous apparition of bishop Leo of Chalcedon. Bara's analysis identifies the source of this episode as a family narrative of the Doukai dynasty. Moreover, he offers a convincing explanation as to why Anna Komnene might want to transmit such a narrative in the political context of the twelfth century court.

Part three of the volume addresses the question of contact and seeks to assess how far various spheres of the Eastern Mediterranean were or were not connected, whether that be in terms of trade networks or networks of religious believers. Matteo Randazzo's careful study of the transfer of Byzantine ceramics from Corinth to Sicily at a time of war offers a useful destabilisation of Byzantium as an ell-encompassing entity with a coherent agenda. These unique objects, probably carried along a regional trade or travel route between Corinth and the Southern Italy, also raise the significant question of what foreign goods meant or signified to those who received them. Sicily, Randazzo notes, had no utilitarian need for Corinthian *sgrafitto* as it produced its own glazed tablewares. Thus, the transfer of goods does not universally occur on an axis of economic rationality but can be driven by local cultural significance.[14]

Moving on from a case study of contact where we may not expect it, we turn to Carl Dixon's study of the Paulicians, seeks to refocus the study of this heretical group away from the contact which scholars often expect: namely one of heretical inheritance between Manicheans, Palucians, Bogomils and the like. Instead, Dixon firmly situates the formation of the Paulicians in an immediate ninth-century Anatolian context focusing on the social forces that brought the category of Paulicians into existence and solidified it. Eliding the tricky category of belief or ideology, he focuses on the complex textual layers of the *Didaskalie,* a crucial Paulician text preserved in Peter of Sicily's *History*, and the particular social concerns of its authors.

Finally, Anna Kelley moves us from "contact" to a new paradigm of a plularity of contacts by challenging one of the received wisdoms of the "global economy" – that cotton came from India, in the aftermath of the spread of Islam. Kelley persuasively demonstrates that cotton cultivation was native to various parts of Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East. More persuasively still, she situates long-distance Indian cotton trade, amid and between multiple networks of regional, and trans-regional cotton trades of significance whether from North and West Africa to Egypt, or from the Iranian Plateau to the Levant. This combinative approach makes clear that the liveliness of local trade networks neither had to replace nor be diminished by long distance, or global, trade.[15]

While each paper foregrounds the dynamics of a particular world-in-motion, this volume does not uncomplicatedly speak to a Global Middle Ages. Rather,

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14   Also discussed in Jonathan Shepard, "Networks" in eds. Holmes, Standen, *The Global Middle Ages*, pp. 116–157.

15   On "combinative" as setting the "global and local in dynamic conversation" see: Holmes, Standen, "Introduciton", p. 3.

the chapters collected here employ the focus of connectedness engendered by the Global turn to demonstrate that transmission and circulation are not predicated on supra-local connectivity. Thus, this volume seeks to both argue and demonstrate that liberating Byzantium from its caricature as static, isolated and inward looking need not be done on an exclusively global scale. We seek to re-vitalise the local networks that defined much of medieval experience, whilst recognising that that zones of material exchange do not necessarily overlap with each other, let alone with zones of human experience and knowledge. Recognising that the Medieval Mediterranean was not a world of fully globalised connectivity, but one of only partially overlapping spheres of transmission and circulation is at the heart of this volume. Several of our papers discuss contemporary phenomena that fall in different, perhaps unconnected worlds. But this does not mean that these at times unconnected worlds were any less in-motion. Hence, with the title of the conference and of the ensuing volume, stressing the many *worlds* of the medieval east, we hope this volume will contribute to emerging histories of medieval connectedness, complicate existing commonsenses on movement of agents, objects and ideas, and showcase the work of a promising group of young scholars.

Online Materials

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'Mobility, Microstructures and Personal Agency in Byzantium', https://rapp.univie.ac .at/ (last accessed, April 2018).

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PART 1

Movement of People

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CHAPTER 1

Evidence for Female Pilgrims at Abu Mina

Grace Stafford

The practice of female pilgrimage in late antiquity is little understood, as our understanding is dominated by a small number of literary accounts that document the experiences of select elite women. Sources such as Egeria's travel diary and Jerome's letter describing Paula's travels in the Holy Land are valuable, but they are limited in what they can tell us about the practices of the "ordinary" women who made up the majority of female pilgrims.[1] Through an analysis of the shrine of Saint Menas at Abu Mina in Egypt, this paper will begin to reorient our focus away from subjective judgements about individual women, and towards a more inclusive understanding of female pilgrimage as a phenomenon, through an holistic approach that integrates literary and archaeological evidence.[2] As women moved through space differently from men and had different options and restrictions, a gendered understanding of pilgrimage is integral to understanding the practice as a whole.[3] Abu Mina

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1 Julie Ann Smith, "Sacred Journeying: Women's Correspondence and Pilgrimage in the Fourth and Eighth Centuries", in *Pilgrimage Explored* ed. Jane Stopford (Woodbridge, 1999) pp. 41–56; Alice-Mary Talbot, "Female Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity and the Byzantine Era," *Acta Byzantina Fennica* 1 (2002), pp. 73–88 and Carolyn Connor, *Women of Byzantium* (New Haven, 2004), pp. 29–44, offer overviews of elite female pilgrimage. Elm states that many pilgrims were female, but that they were mostly aristocrats who travelled with large retinues (Susanna Elm, *"Virgins of God" The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 273–274). Most pilgrims however, both female and male, were "ordinary" people making relatively short journeys to local shrines (Cyril Mango, "The Pilgrim's Motivation" *Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Bonn 22–28 September 1991* (Münster, 1995) pp. 6–7). Studies of medieval pilgrimage have noted that pilgrims typically travelled no further than 50 miles to an healing shrine (Ronald Finucane, *Miracles and pilgrims: popular beliefs in medieval England* (London, 1977) pp. 161, 166–171).
2 Archaeological studies of pilgrimage sites are often focused on the architecture and chronology of ritual centres, paying little attention to pilgrim experience. The recent volume: Wiebke Friese and Troels Myrup Kristensen eds., *Excavating Pilgrimage: archaeological approaches to sacred travel and movement in the ancient world* (Oxford, 2017) explores the experiential nature of pilgrimage and addresses gender in relation to Ancient Greek pilgrimage (Friese in the above volume).
3 Medieval women frequently constituted at least half of the visitors to local shrines (Finucane, *Miracles and pilgrims*, pp. 169, 184–186; Rebekka Habermas, "Weibliche Erfahrungswelten. Frauen in der Welt des Wunders," in *Auf der Suche nach der Frau im Mittelalter:*

offers well-published archaeological excavations as well as textual sources, which allow us to establish that a significant proportion of pilgrims here were women, and to examine the ways in which the site could consciously cater to female visitors through the provision of gender-specific facilities, souvenirs, and narratives. We can also begin to trace who these female pilgrims were and where they were coming from, and to reconstruct potential motivations for women to visit Saint Menas in particular. This reveals a local network based on relatively short-distance travel, which offered women the opportunity for significant movement and visibility outside the domestic sphere.

Seeking to understand female experience at Abu Mina necessitates critical engagement with the archaeology of gender, and how the dominant gender ideologies of late antiquity were developed by elite males (both past and present). The study of gender in classical archaeology lags behind other disciplines, and a gendered approach is frequently written off on the assumption that "gender issues are not always apparent in the physical record".[4] This is often rooted in the presumed masculinity of material remains, and forgets that "archaeological evidence is the consequence of research questions as much as their starting point."[5] Evidence of gender exists, but an historical lack of interest in gendered issues has meant that theoretical and practical strategies have not been well developed.[6] The material evidence presented here will show how women interacted with the site through analysis of gendered divisions of space preserved through architectural remains, and the implications of selected small finds that can be gendered. To integrate useful information from the literary sources we must also recognise the problematic nature of reconstructing female experience in the past. We most often hear about women in texts written by men, in which women frequently function as literary devices or

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Fragen, Quellen, Antworten, ed. Bea Lundt (Munich, 1991), p. 68; see Anne E. Bailey, "Flights of Distance, Time and Fancy: Women Pilgrims and their Journeys in English Medieval Miracle Narratives," *Gender and History* 24 (2012) p. 295, Fig 1 on women's visits to additional shrines while on pilgrimage).

4   Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Engendering the Roman House", in *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* eds. Diana Kleiner and Susan Matheson (New Haven, 1996) p. 112.

5   Penelope Allison, "Characterizing Roman Artifacts to Investigate Gendered Practices in Contexts Without Sexed Bodies," *American Journal of Archaeology* 119 (2015) p. 105; Silvia Tomášková, "Next stop: Gender. Women at Roman military forts in Germany," *Archaeological Dialogues* 13 (2006) p. 20.

6   Shelby Brown, "Feminist Research in Archaeology: What does it mean? Why is it taking so long?" in *Feminist Theory and the Classics,* eds. Nancy S. Rabinowitz and Amy Richlin (New York, 1993) p. 250.

ideals and thus such sources do not report accurately on their lives.[7] This analysis will therefore identify how motifs about women and pilgrimage function across the available sources, rather than trying to draw out the "real" experiences of individuals.

1   The Shrine of Saint Menas

Saint Menas was born in Egypt and served in the Roman army in Asia Minor during the reign of Diocletian. He withdrew to the desert after being ordered to sacrifice to pagan gods, but after five years was called back by an angel to face his martyrdom. How his remains returned to Egypt is debated: one tradition records that his sister brought them back, and another that a pious regiment was transferred to Egypt, and they returned his remains. Both agree, however, that the site of his burial was determined by the camels carrying his body, who refused to move from a spot that had been divinely ordained.[8] It was at this location that his shrine was built, and the pilgrimage site of Abu Mina developed.

Abu Mina is located 46 km south-west of Alexandria, in the Mareotis district of modern Egypt (Fig. 1.1). The earliest archaeological remains date from the late 4th century and belong to Menas' tomb in an earlier *hypogaeum* and a small mud-brick construction at ground level.[9] The first small church dates to the first half of the 5th century, and expansion and renovation continued well into the Justinianic period. As the site grew in importance the shrine became a thriving pilgrimage destination, and in turn a town developed around the shrine to support the industry.[10]

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7   Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealised Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Massachusetts, 1996) pp. 45–67; Elizabeth A. Clark, "The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the 'Linguistic Turn'", *Church History* 67 (1998) pp. 15–31; Susan Sered, "Women Pilgrims and Woman Saints: Gendered Icons and Iconization of Gender at Israeli Shrines", *National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) Journal* 11 (1999) p. 49; Ross S. Kraemer, *Unreliable Witnesses: Religion, Gender, and History in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2011) pp. 120–132; Susan Hylen, *A Modest Apostle: Thecla and the History of Women in the Early Church* (Oxford, 2015) p. 72.

8   James Drescher *Apa Mena: A Selection of Coptic Texts relating to St Menas* (Cairo, 1946) pp. 102–103, 140–141.

9   Stephen J. Davis, *The Cult of St Thecla: A Tradition of Women's Piety in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2001) pp. 114–115; Peter Grossmann, "The Pilgrimage Center of Abû Mînâ", in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, ed. D. Frankfurter (Leiden, 1998) p. 282.

10   See Peter Grossmann, *Abu Mina: A Guide to the Ancient Pilgrimage Center* (Cairo, 1986) for a survey of the excavations carried out since the early 20th century.

FIGURE 1.1   Plan of the centre of the pilgrimage site of Abu Mina
(ADAPTED FROM GROSSMANN, "CHRISTLICHE ARCHITEKTUR", ABB. 15)
REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF P. GROSSMANN

2   Literary Evidence

Aspects of the life and miracles of Menas are recorded in a variety of languages including Coptic, Greek, Nubian, Arabic, and Ethiopic.[11] These texts are part of a large corpus concerning early-Christian holy figures, which contain

11   Drescher, *Apa Mena*, p. 110, Note 1.

biographical accounts and miracle collections. Accounts such as these serve to glorify the individuals and justify their divine status, but they can also provide valuable information about the pilgrimage practices their worship generated, and any "specialisms" that might be associated with a particular saint.[12] In this section I shall discuss what we can learn from a sample of the Coptic,[13] Greek,[14] and Nubian[15] sources about female pilgrimage to Menas' shrine, which reveal a preoccupation with the dangers facing female travellers, and the association of Saint Menas with fertility.

The Greek and Coptic texts both preserve the story of a rich childless woman from Philoxenité (a settlement on the shores of lake Mareotis), who intended to dedicate all her worldly possessions to Menas' shrine.[16] She was travelling alone across the desert when she was attacked by a soldier who was meant to be guarding the road. Before he could sexually assault her, however, she was saved by Menas.[17] This miracle illustrates not only the saint's power, but also suggests anxieties about women travelling by themselves. Despite her noble intentions, the pilgrim's lack of accompaniment made her vulnerable, and this was exploited by a figure who should have been there for her protection. What is significant for our purposes is that this cautionary tale shows that although travelling alone was ill-advised, the concept of a lone female pilgrim was not an unacceptable or unrecognisable motif. Another miracle

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12   See for example, the large and diverse corpus of texts surrounding the pilgrimage centres of Saint Thekla at Seleucia, and Saint Simeon the Elder at Qal'at Sem'an. Scott Fitzgerald Johnson, "Miracles of Saint Thekla" *Miracles Tales from Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2012) pp. 1–202; Robert Doran, *The Lives of Simeon Stylites*, (Michigan, 1992). Johnson also provides a select catalogue of miracle collections in Appendix 3 of *The Life and Miracles of Thekla: A Literary Study* (Cambridge, 2006) pp. 239–243. For more information on pilgrimage accounts themselves, see Pierre Maraval, *Récits des premiers pèlerins chrétiens au Proche-Orient (IVe–VIIe siècle)*, (Paris, 1996), and *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient* (Paris, 1985) pp. 13–19 for bibliographic references to major pilgrimage accounts and miracle collections.

13   Drescher *Apa Mena*.

14   Ivan Pomialovskii ed., *Zhitie prepodobnago Paisiia Velikago i Timofeia patriarkha aleksandriiskago poviestvovanie o chudesakh Sv. velikomuchenika Miny* (Saint Petersburg, 1900) pp. 62–89.

15   Francis L. Griffith ed., *The Nubian texts of the Christian Period* (Berlin, 1913) pp. 10–14.

16   Pomialovskii, *Zhitie prepodobnago Paisiia Velikago* pp. 68–70; Drescher *Apa Mena*, Miracle 4, pp. 116–118.

17   Drescher, *Apa Mena*, pp. 116–118, including Delehaye's French summary of the text from the Greek in note 5, from Hippolyte Delehaye, "L'invention des reliques de saint Ménas à Constantinople" *Analecta Bollandiana* (XXIX, 1910) pp. 128–135. Drescher's text does not provide a full translation of all 17 miracles as many are fragmentary, but he notes that Miracle 13 also concerns the rescue of a female pilgrim attacked by a soldier (p. 107).

notes that the wife of a man punished by the saint was inspired to donate her wealth to Menas, and subsequently made annual pilgrimages to the shrine until her death.[18]

The danger of travel for women is also explored in the miracle of a Samaritan woman from Alexandria who travels to Abu Mina with a group of Christian women to seek healing. They take a boat across the lake and stay at a resthouse in Philoxenité, but during the night the proprietor of the house tries to rape the Samaritan pilgrim. Once again, before the assault takes place Menas appears and saves the woman, who is later baptised.[19] In this tale the innkeeper lures the woman "inside" by warning her that someone might try to attack her if she sleeps outside with the other pilgrims. He convinces her it is safer to take a private room inside, but this is ultimately where the attack takes place. We will return to this idea of shared outdoor accommodation when we turn to the archaeological evidence. Although in this tale the danger of sleeping communally outdoors is not as great as in private accommodation inside, this serves only to drive the plot; communal sleeping must have carried certain risks such as theft and assault. While the miracle seeks to glorify Menas, it reveals that the practicalities of choosing accommodation must have been a real logistical concern. Communal and private accommodation was available, but for a woman travelling without a guardian, both carried risks. After this miracle, the Samaritan woman was so grateful that she remained in the service of the shrine in perpetuity, suggesting there may have been a community of people, including women, who lived there permanently.[20]

Saint Menas also seems to have had powerful abilities concerning fertility. The Coptic *Encomium* records that he himself was born following a fertility miracle in which his mother Euphemia was granted a child by the Virgin.[21] The first miracle of the Coptic collection also records Menas' healing of a sterile female camel following supplication by a male pilgrim who had heard of his powers.[22] In addition, a Nubian text records a miracle in which Menas granted fertility to an entire household, in which the wife, female servants, and cattle were all infertile.[23] The story of the camel-owner implies that Menas was known for his healing abilities, while the Nubian miracle emphasises that this particular healing ability was considered exceptionally powerful.

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18   Drescher, *Apa Mena*, pp. 117–118.
19   Drescher, *Apa Mena*, pp. 119–123.
20   Drescher, *Apa Mena*, p. 122. Miracles 1 and 3 also record men living in service of the shrine.
21   Drescher, *Apa Mena*, pp. 132–133.
22   Drescher, *Apa Mena*, pp. 110–111.
23   Griffith, *Nubian texts*, pp. 10–14.

While we should be critical of miracle accounts and not treat them as historical records, the way in which "women" as a category of visitor are represented is revealing. The literary tradition surrounding pilgrimage to Saint Menas suggests an awareness of the concerns and dangers facing female pilgrims and lone travellers. The emphasis on the protection of these groups may have served to comfort potential visitors, and reassure them that the saint was watching over them on their journey.[24] On a more practical level, such stories reflect the relative normality of female travellers, and the practical considerations of pilgrimage. Menas' connection with fertility provides one reason why his shrine was frequented by female pilgrims, as he clearly had a strong association with reproductive health, which in antiquity was considered the responsibility of women. Evidence concerning where these women were coming from suggests that many were relatively local: the Samaritan woman and the woman who received fertility for her household both lived in Alexandria, while the woman attacked on the road was from a settlement on the shores of lake Mareotis.

3   Architectural Evidence

Architectural remains at Abu Mina are extensive and grow exponentially with each excavation season. This section will therefore limit itself only to those buildings that provide useful information about gender at the site: the double bath, southern hemicycle, "peristyle complex", and baptisteries.

The double bath represents the most distinct instance of gender segregation at Abu Mina (Fig. 1.2). The complex is located along the processional route towards the Great Basilica, to the north of the peristyle complex.[25] The plan shows a large, enclosed building, with two similar, yet separate sections that are both complete bathing complexes. The two sections (north and south), are strictly separate, and have been identified by Grossmann as facilitating single-sex bathing.[26] The southern section is the oldest, built sometime in the 5th century, while the northern section was completed in the 6th century.[27]

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24   See Bailey, "Flights of Distance" p. 293 on miracle collections as consciously constructed didactic texts that could be disseminated to visiting pilgrims.

25   See Wolfgang Müller-Wiener, "Abu Mena 4. Vorläufiger Bericht", *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 21 (1966) pp. 171–187 for full publication and plans of the baths.

26   Grossmann, *Abu Mina*, pp. 20–21; Grossmann, "The Pilgrimage Center", p. 292.

27   Grossmann, *Abu Mina*, p. 21.
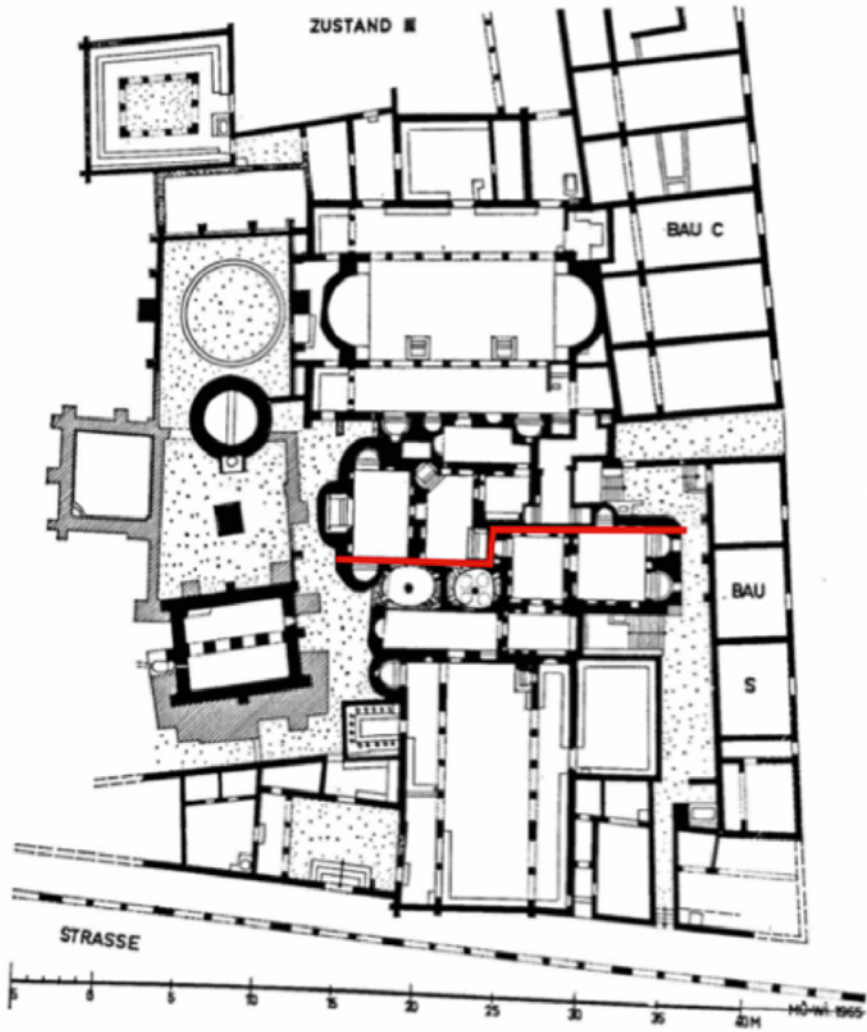
FIGURE 1.2   Plan of the 6th century phase of the double baths at Abu Mina, indicating the
separation of the two suites
(ADAPTED FROM MÜLLER-WIENER, "ABU MENA 4", FIG 3) © DAI CAIRO

Grossmann suggests that the double bath was not for everyday use, but was
primarily used in preparation for Easter and by neophytes before baptism.[28]
However the maintenance of such large baths would have been prohibitively

28   Grossmann, *Abu Mina*, p. 20; Grossmann, "The Pilgrimage Center", p. 292.

expensive if they were not in frequent use by a large clientele.[29] I would also suggest that if they only catered to small numbers at a time, then providing segregated facilities would not be necessary, as the genders could be easily separated with allocated time slots.[30] That it was feasible in the late 5th and early 6th centuries to expand these facilities speaks to the large number of visiting pilgrims, especially women.

South of the main church complex lies the southern hemicycle, a semi-circular courtyard bounded by a curved colonnade to the south, and the walls of the baptistery complex and crypt to the north (Fig. 1.3). From this courtyard a two-story building was entered through a series of rooms. Grossmann identifies these rooms as an incubation centre,[31] however Von Ehrenheim prefers his earlier suggestion that it was a *xenodochium* for wealthy people who could afford private or semi-private rooms, and wanted to stay as near to the relics as possible.[32] The exact function of the structure, however, is not as pertinent to this discussion as the fact that the building had two sets of toilets located side by side, which Grossmann describes as "obviously assigned separately by gender".[33] Interestingly, on the most detailed plan both latrines are marked,

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29   The double baths were serviced by a deep well to the west that filled several cisterns (Grossmann, *Abu Mina,* pp. 17, 21–22). Most other buildings had underground rain-water cisterns (Grossmann, "The Pilgrimage Center", p. 292).

30   An inscription from baths in Lusitania records segregation by time, but this is a rare survival. See: Roy B. Ward, "Women in Roman Baths", *The Harvard Theological Review* 85 (1992) p. 141). For segregated bathing in the Roman period see: Fikret Yegül, *Bathing in the Roman World* (Cambridge, 2010) pp. 32–34. There was no hard and fast rule for segregated/mixed bathing through most of the imperial period, with practice varying across time, location, and personal preference (Yegül, *Bathing,* p. 34). For a small double bathhouse in sixth century Miletus see Philipp Niewöhner, "Die südstadtthermen von Milet: Vom kaiserzeitlichen Baderundgang zum byzantinischen Doppelbad", *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (2015), pp. 173–235.

31   Grossmann, "The Pilgrimage Center", p. 288; Peter Grossmann, "Late Antique Incubation Centres in Egypt", in *Salute e guarigione nella tarda antichità: atti della giornata tematica dei Seminari di archeologia Cristiana, Rome, 20 maggio 2004,* eds. H. Brandenburg, S. Heid and C. Markschies (Vatican City, 2007) p. 127. Grossmann reiterates his interpretation in his recent article "Pilgerunterkünfte in Abū Mīnā", in *Für Seelenheil und Lebensglück. Das byzantinische Pilgerwesen und seine Wurzeln,* eds. D. Ariantzi and I. Eichner (Mainz, 2018) p. 205.

32   Hedvig von Ehrenheim, "Identifying incubation areas in Pagan and Early Christian times", *Proceedings of the Danish Institute at Athens* 6 (2009) p. 266; Peter Grossmann et al., "Abu Mina. Elfter vorläufiger Bericht. Kampagnen 1982 und 1983", *Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 40 (1984) p. 137.

33   Grossmann, "The Pilgrimage Center", p. 288.
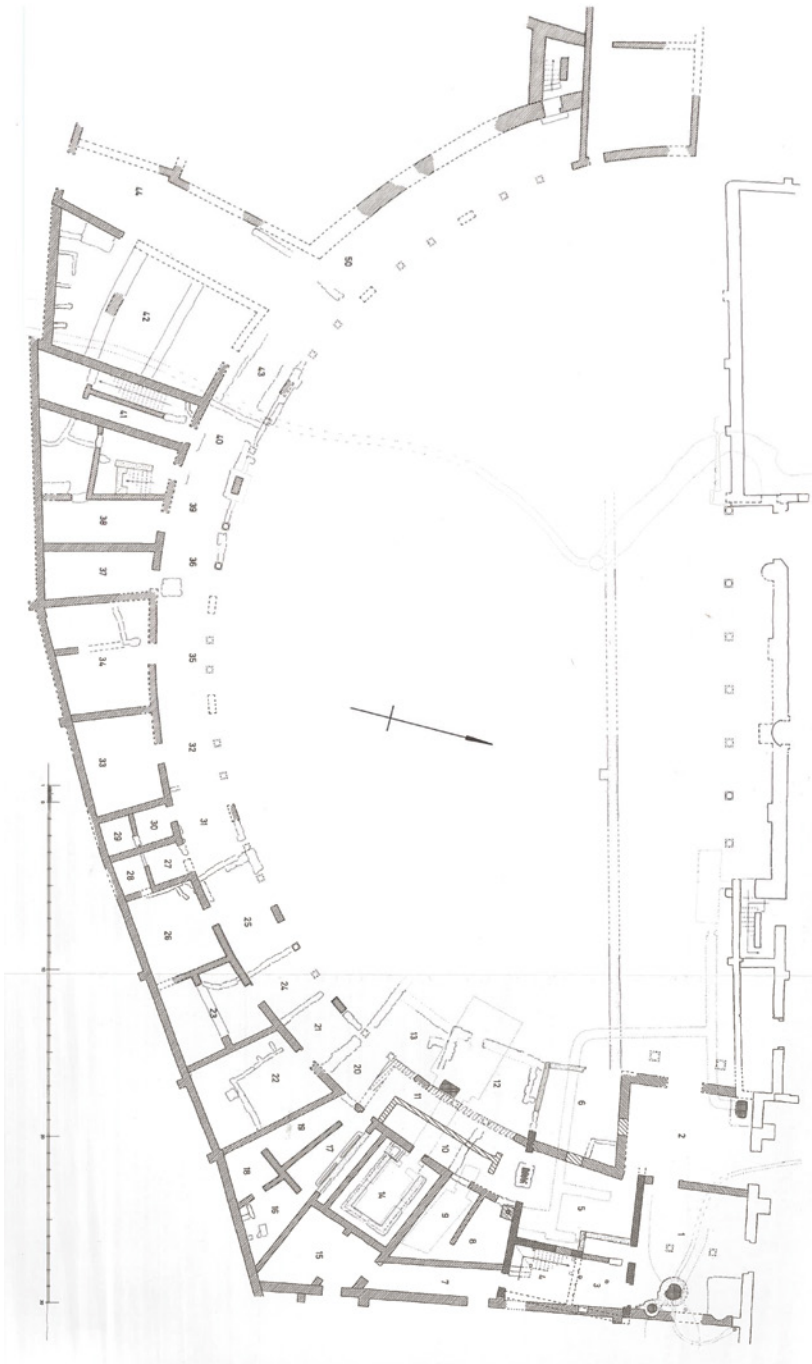
FIGURE 1.3   Plan of the southern hemicycle at Abu Mina
(AFTER GROSSMANN "ABŪ MĪNĀ 12. VORLÄUFIGER BERICHT" ABB. 13) REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF P. GROSSMANN

with the larger of the two identified as that intended for women.[34] This structure was clearly used to accommodate pilgrims in some way, therefore the presence of two sets of toilets next to one another indicates that they catered to the needs of two separate groups of visitors, assumedly women and men.

To the north of the main sacred site, a 6th century *xenodochium* described by Grossmann as a "peristyle complex" is located just off the western side of the processional north-south road, directly abutting the large transverse road which links to this main route (Fig. 1.4).[35] The complex consists of two peristyle buildings with very broad porticoes, and a small number of rooms around their outsides. Grossmann suggests these broad porticoes sheltered poorer people who could not pay for a room, and takes this further with the suggestion that the two peristyles placed next to each other could "be explained by the desire to divide the sexes."[36] A latrine was also excavated in one of the rooms between the buildings, but was only connected to the eastern peristyle,[37] while the other rooms were structured in such a way that prevented any direct communication between the two peristyles.[38] The provision of separate toilets would support the conclusion that the two peristyles were segregated by gender. In a recent article, Grossmann has provided further evidence for segregation, noting that the outer entrances to the peristyles were located on different sides of the building and confirming that each of the peristyles was provided with its own communal latrine.[39] This concept of communal accommodation under a large portico is familiar from the miracle of the Samaritan woman

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34 Willi Hölzle in Peter Grossmann, "Abū Mīnā 12. Vorläufiger Bericht. Kampagnen 1984–1986" *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1991), p. 475. Hölzle identifies the larger of the latrines as the women's latrine on the grounds that it has greater provision for seats. The latrines are marked as Nos. 14 and 17 on the plan (Abb. 13). See also Grossmann "Pilgerunterkünfte in Abū Mīnā" pp. 205–206 in which he also notes the gender segregation and reiterates the identification of the larger of the latrines as that for women.

35 Peter Grossmann and Jacek Kościuk, "Report on the excavation at Abu Mina in Autumn 1989" *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 30 (1991) p. 67; Peter Grossmann and Jacek Kosciuk, "Report on the excavations at Abū Mīnā in Spring 2005", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 44 (2005) p. 32.

36 Grossmann and Kościuk "Report on the excavations at Abu Mina in Autumn 1989", p. 68.

37 Peter Grossmann et al., "Report on the excavations at Abu Mina in Spring 1993", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 33 (1994), p. 91, Plate xiib.

38 Peter Grossmann, "Report on the excavations at Abū Mīnā in Spring 1994", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 34 (1995) p. 155.

39 Grossmann "Pilgerunterkünfte in Abū Mīnā" pp. 204–205. Grossmann identifies the larger of the peristyles as intended to house women and children (p. 204). He also notes that at the western end of the complex another smaller building is located that is also formed of two peristyles that may have been roofed over. He suggests that this may have been intended for winter when fewer pilgrims may have visited (p. 205).
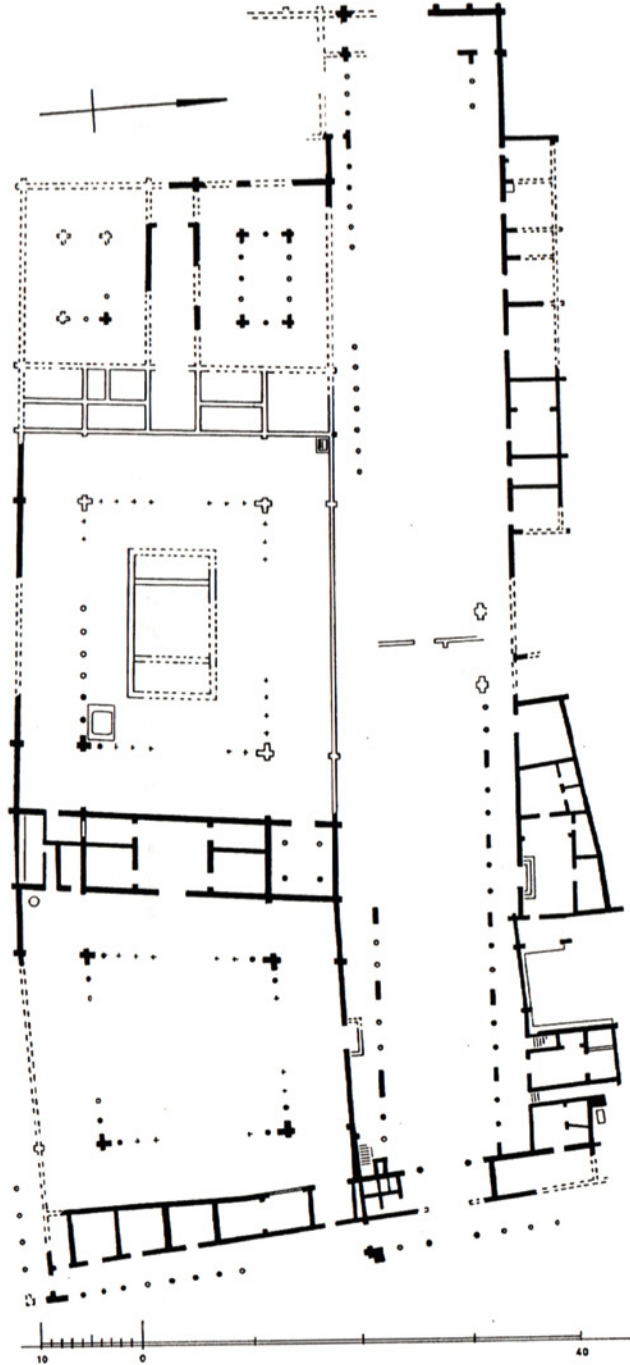
FIGURE 1.4   Plan of the peristyle complex at Abu Mina
(AFTER PETER GROSSMANN, "ABÛ MÎNÂ" IN ÄGYPTEN IN SPÄTANTIK-CHRIST-
LICHER ZEIT. EINFÜHRUNG IN DIE KOPTISCHE KULTUR, M. KRAUSE ED.
(WIESBADEN, 1998), ABB. 4) REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF
P. GROSSMANN

discussed above, and the possibility of segregation may reflect anxieties about assault which we clearly see articulated in such literary sources. Indeed, this manner of accommodating female pilgrims (in segregated areas where poorer women sleep outside under the cover of porticoes) is still seen today, as is demonstrated in Werbner's study of Sufi female pilgrimage to Ghamkol Sharif in Pakistan.[40]

The baptisteries of Abu Mina potentially provide some of the most interesting evidence relating to gender at the site, but their interpretation is debated.[41] The main church complex was formed of the Great Basilica, the Martyr Church (above the crypt), and the baptistery.[42] The baptistery underwent several expansions and alterations, but by far the most impressive was in the 6th century, when the font was moved and enlarged (Fig. 1.5).[43] Around an octagonal room containing the font were arranged a suite of other rooms, presumably used for the preparations for baptism. Sometime later in the 6th century a second font was added in the chamber to the west, although it is not clear when. The interpretation of this second font to facilitate gender segregated baptism was suggested by Grossmann in 1986.[44] This thesis was later rejected, however, with

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40 Pnina Werbner, "Beyond division: Women, pilgrimage and nation building in South Asian Sufism", *Women's Studies International Forum* 33 (2010) p. 378.

41 See Sebastian Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* (Münster, 1998), pp. 102–103 for a survey of all baptisteries at Abu Mina.

42 Grossmann *Abu Mina*, pp. 12–14.

43 Peter Grossmann, *Abū Mīnā. II. Das Baptisterium* (Mainz, 2004), pp. 48–72. Grossmann attributes the expansion of the baptistery to changes in the rite in Egypt, reflecting the introduction of post-baptismal anointing. See: Peter Grossmann, "Report on the excavations at Abū Mīnā in Spring 1997", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 38 (1999), p. 69. This must however remain speculative.

44 Grossmann *Abu Mina*, p. 17. Ristow records that there were also two fonts discovered relating to an earlier phase of the baptistery (*Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, p. 102). This also appears in a plan of the main basilica in a publication from 1980 (Peter Grossmann and Horst Jaritz "Abū Mīna Neunter vorläufiger Bericht. Kampagnen 1977, 1978, und 1979" *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 36, Abb. 1). This appears to be the result of early confusion regarding different phases of the building – I believe the *Nebenpiscina* referred to by Ristow is in fact the font of the first phase of the baptistery, originally understood by Kauffmann to have been an additional font for children. On this see Grossmann *Das Baptisterium* p. 27 note 43 on Kauffmann's original interpretation (Carl M. Kaufmann, *Zweiter Bericht über die Ausgrabungen der Menasheiligtümer in der Mareotiswüste* (Cairo, 1906) p. 70) and later rejection (Carl M. Kaufmann, *Die Menasstadt und das Nationalheiligtum der altchristlichen Aegypter in der westalexandrinischen Wüste Vol. 1* (Leipzig, 1910), p. 100). In any case, there is no evidence for any double fonts before the Justinianic phase in the later monographs on the baptistery and church (Grossmann *Das Baptisterium*, and Peter Grossmann, *Abū Mīnā I. Die Gruftkirche und die Gruft* [Mainz 1989]). For these reasons, the discussion will be limited here to the later Justinianic phase.
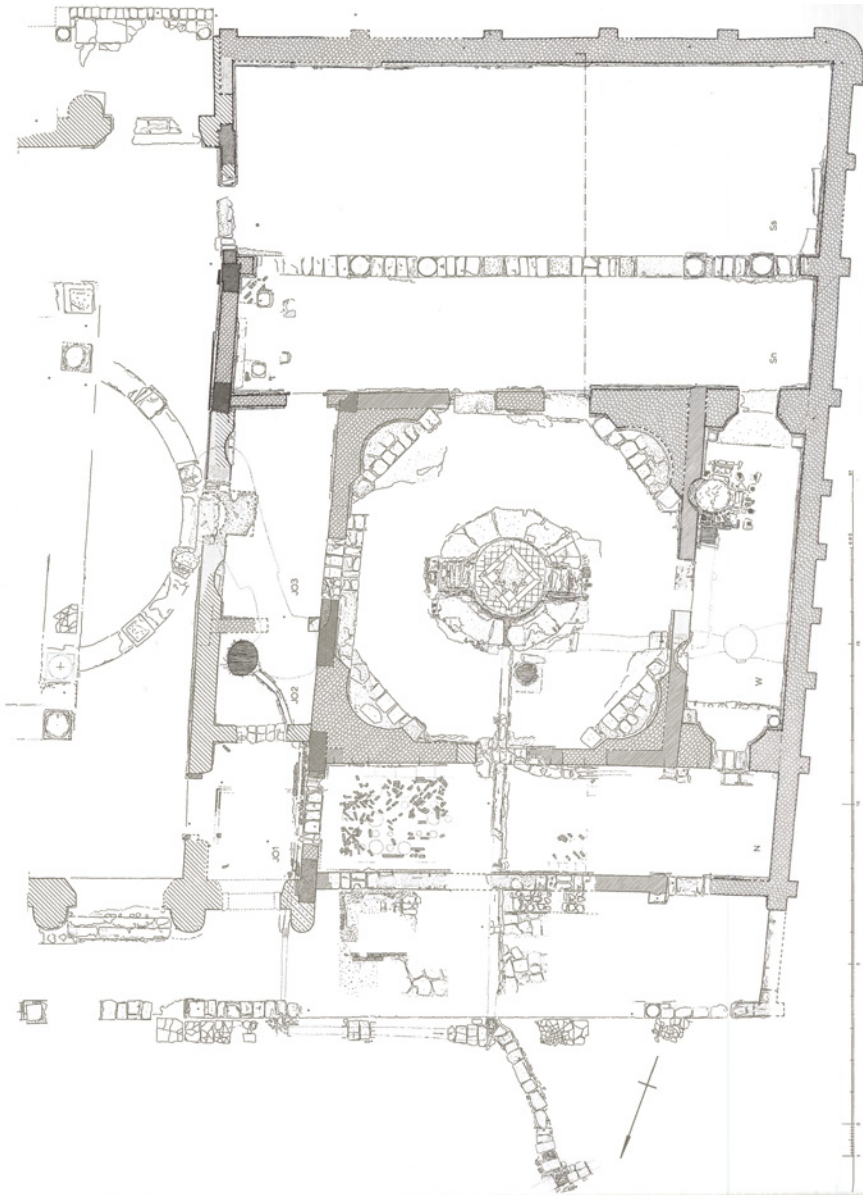
FIGURE 1.5   Plan of the Justinianic phase of the baptistery of the main church at Abu Mina
(AFTER GROSSMANN, "DAS BAPTISTERIUM", FALTPLAN 2). REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF P. GROSSMANN.

Grossmann stating that the smaller font was probably used in low-season when there were fewer pilgrims.[45] He later stated that the theory of segregated baptism should be rejected because the room in which the smaller font was placed was used during the earlier periods of the church as the room in which the *apotaxis* from Satan and *syntaxis* to Christ took place, and therefore both fonts could not be used concurrently.[46] In his 2004 monograph on the baptistery he went on to describe the concept of physically segregated baptismal spaces in antiquity as "extremely questionable". He suggests that the cost of using the large font was perhaps only justified at events with many baptisms.[47]

Grossmann's re-evaluation at first seems compelling, however he arrives at this conclusion through several unverifiable assumptions and does not consider the chronology of the site. Firstly, he judges the concept of segregated baptism to be "extremely questionable", despite acknowledging a passage from Augustine's *City of God*, in which a woman afflicted with cancer is told to seek a blessing from the first person to come out "of the women's part of the baptistery, after being baptised".[48] This source alone suggests that physically separate spaces for baptism existed, even if they were not widespread. Secondly, Grossmann bases his thesis on his assumption of the functions of the rooms around the main font, and that these functions were fixed. Surely if it were necessary, parts of the rooms could be screened off and separated, indeed this may explain why the smaller font is placed to the far side of the western chamber. Other sources also make it clear that keeping men and women separate during baptism was the norm. The *Traditio Apostolica* explicitly states that children should be baptised first, followed by men, and lastly women, indicating that segregated baptism was widely practiced through temporal spacing.[49] The third-century *Didascalia Apostolorum* further stipulates that women should take an active role in baptism by anointing the bodies of female catechumen, as it is "not right that a woman should be seen by a man". Some stages of baptism involved near or total nudity, and the presence of women was ideal

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45   Grossmann, "The Pilgrimage Center", p. 284.
46   Peter Grossmann and Jacek Kościuk, "Report on the excavations at Abū Mīnā in Spring 2000", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 40 (2001), p. 98.
47   Grossmann, *Das Baptisterium*, pp. 85–86.
48   Augustine, *The city of God against the pagans*, XXII.8 trans. R.W. Dyson (London, 1998) p. 1124.
49   *On the Apostolic Tradition* 21 trans. Alistair Stewart-Sykes (New York, 2001) pp. 110–111. Grossmann notes this elsewhere: Peter Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur in Ägypten* (Leiden, 2002) p. 138. The date of this text is debated: Stewart-Sykes advocates an early 3rd century date (*Apostolic Tradition* pp. 11–12) however others would perhaps push parts of the text into around the mid 4th century (Paul F. Bradshaw et al. *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, 2002) pp. 13–15).

because it meant the "baptism may be kept intact in chastity and holiness".[50] Even sources that deny any sacerdotal role for women in relation to baptism accepted that female attendants were beneficial for protecting the dignity of naked women.[51] It is clear from these sources that women were routinely baptised separately from men, and that ideally other women were needed to maintain the appropriate boundaries between the minister baptising, and the catechumen.[52] It therefore does not seem unreasonable that physically separated spaces for baptism would be efficient and desirable, if space and funds could provide.[53]

There are also other complexes in the region which have two baptismal fonts that may have functioned simultaneously. One also at Abu Mina was constructed near the western gate during the 6th century, and although it originally had a simple font, not long after its construction a larger, more ornate baptistery was constructed as well (Fig. 1.6).[54] Ristow has suggested this as facilitating segregated baptism, but it remains unclear whether they were in use simultaneously.[55] A church structure of uncertain date at Mahūra al-Qibli (also in the Mareotis region, 12 km west of Taposiris Magna), also has two fonts, both covered by a *ciborium* (Fig. 1.7).[56] Multiple instances of sites with two large baptismal fonts is unusual, therefore their concentration here may support the conclusion that segregated baptism was particularly popular in this region.[57]

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50 *Didascalia Apostolorum* 3.12, trans. Alistair Stewart-Sykes (Turnhout, 2009) quoted in Paul F. Bradshaw, "Women and Baptism in the *Didascalia Apostolorum*", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 20 (2012) p. 642.

51 Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 79: 3.6 trans. Frank Williams (Leiden, 2009) p. 639.

52 Jensen considers that the lack of specific instructions concerning segregation probably means that it was taken for granted. Robin M. Jensen, *Living Water: images, symbols and settings of early Christian baptism. Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae Vol. 105* (Leiden, 2011) p. 166. See also Ellen J. Christiansen, "Women and baptism", *Studia Theologica – Nordic Journal of Theology* 35 (1981) p. 4.

53 The 5th century Samagher Casket offers another option: one of the sides shows curtains hung around a *ciborium* giving privacy to what is thought to be a font. Davide Longhi, *La capsella eburnea di Samagher: iconografia e committenza* (Ravenna, 2006), Tav xva. See also Jensen, *Living Water*, pp. 95–98.

54 Mohamed Abdel-Aziz Negm, "Recent discoveries at Abu Mina", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 32 (1993) pp. 130–135; Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, p. 103.

55 Ristow *Frühchristliche Baptisterien,* p. 103. Abel-Aziz Negm in "Recent discoveries" p. 130 mentions the smaller font is "now filled" with lime mortar but does not indicate when.

56 Grossmann and Jaritz "Abū Mīnā. Neunter vorläufiger Bericht" pp. 225–226; Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, pp. 109–110. Grossmann simply describes the churches at this site as "early Christian", *Christliche Architektur*, p. 387.

57 In other instances of double fonts the second is often shallow, and frequently interpreted as facilitating infant baptism. This is not the case with these examples. I am grateful to Stefanie Lenk for our discussion about infant baptism.
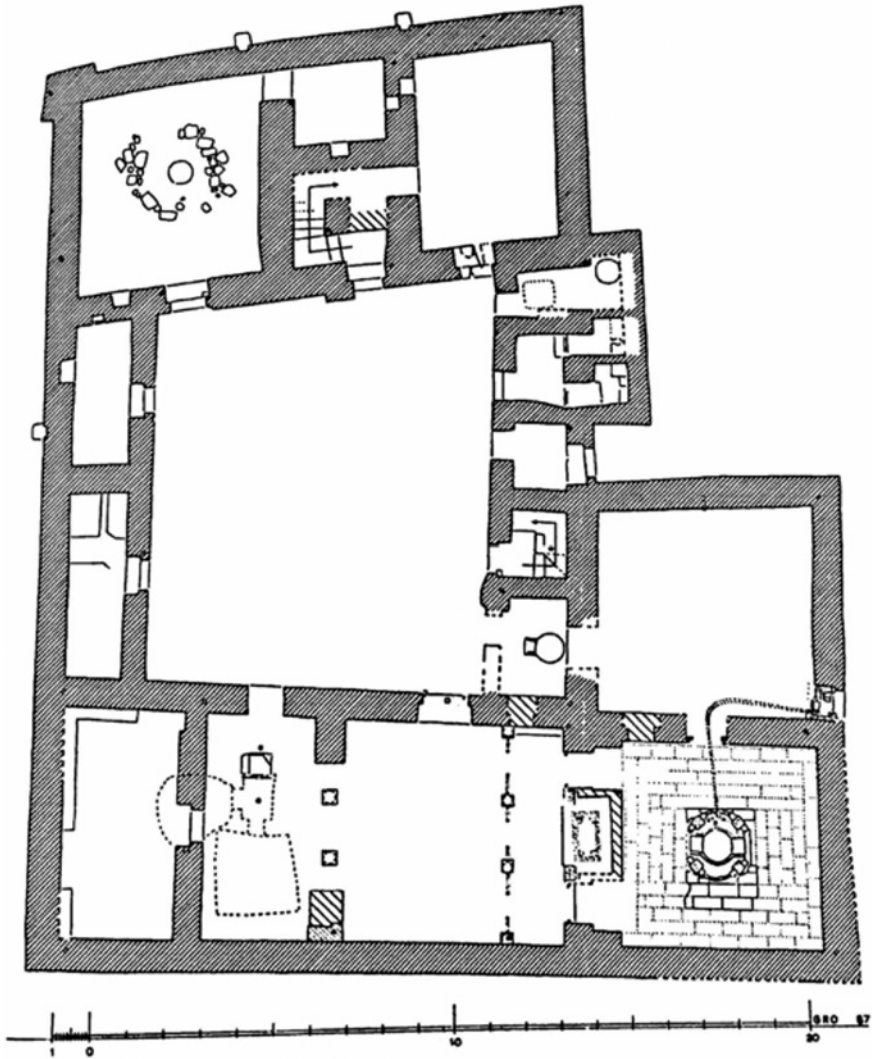
FIGURE 1.6   Plan of the western complex at Abu Mina. The larger font is located in the bottom
right corner of this plan, and the earlier smaller font in the small room directly to
the northwest
(ADBEL-AZIZ NEGM, "RECENT DISCOVERIES AT ABU MINA", FIG 1)
REPRODUCED FROM *BULLETIN DE LA SOCIÉTÉ D'ARCHÉOLOGIE COPTE*,
VOL. XXXII WITH PERMISSION OF THE SOCIÉTÉ D'ARCHÉOLOGIE COPTE

The contention that the baptistery of the main church was essentially being
downsized to conserve money and water also does not fit well within the chro-
nology of the site. During the 6th century, when the main baptistery was
enlarged and the smaller font added, Abu Mina went through a period of
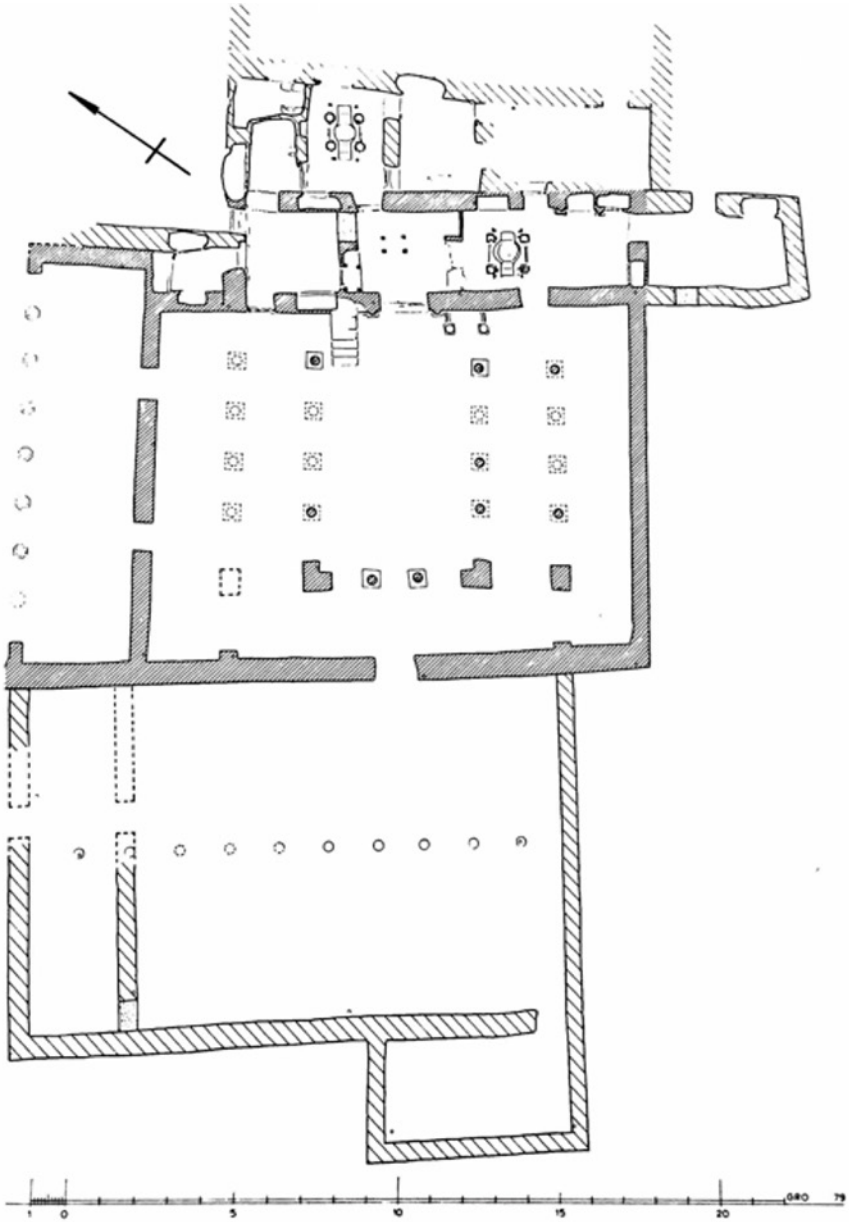
FIGURE 1.7   Plan of the central church of Mahūra-al- Qiblī with two baptismal fonts
(GROSSMANN AND JARITZ "ABŪ MĪNĀ. NEUNTER VORLÄUFIGER BERICHT",
ABB. 9). REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF P. GROSSMANN

architectural growth and development. The expansion of the double baths was completed during the 6th century, the peristyle complex dates from this period, and so does the transverse street separating the two. We also see the construction of the western complex described above, and a separate bath building at the northern edge of the settlement, which seems to have remained in use until the latter half of the 7th century.[58] Just outside the perimeter walls to the north and to the east are two further churches built in the 6th century that each have their own baptisteries.[59] This picture is one of expansion and growth, with the building of new pilgrim accommodation, a major revision of the street-plan, and the provision of greater gender-segregated facilities. If a small complex could afford to expand its baptistery, and the baths could afford to greatly increase their running and maintenance costs, it does not seem logical that the primary sacred site would need to construct a second font to save money because not enough pilgrims were visiting.[60] This rationale does not, it must be said, prove that the second font was used for segregated baptism, but it does suggest that it should not be dismissed as a theory.

It is clear from the architectural evidence above that Abu Mina was a busy and thriving pilgrimage destination throughout the 6th century. Pilgrims could choose from a variety of accommodation, and perhaps practice incubation. The double baths and the two sets of toilets in the southern hemicycle provide the clearest evidence for gendered facilities, while the peristyle complex remains a compelling possibility. Consideration of literary sources and late antique Christian sensibilities concerning the body reveals that segregated baptism was the norm, and the two fonts of the main church complex might reflect how this could be achieved. Without further evidence this cannot be proven, but Grossmann's theory of downsizing does not fit well with the contemporary context of a boom in construction during the 6th century. The certain provision of separated bathing and toilet facilities shows that women made up a large proportion of the pilgrim population, and the possibility of segregated accommodation further illustrates an awareness of the needs and dangers that women faced when they travelled.

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58   Grossmann *Abu Mina*, pp. 22–23; Grossmann and Kościuk "Report on the excavations at Abū Mīnā in Spring 2005", pp. 31–32.

59   Grossmann "The Pilgrimage Center" pp. 295–296; Ristow *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* p. 103.

60   I am grateful to Efthymios Rizos for directing me to texts which explicitly reference the fact that Christians visited shrines throughout the year, not just on a small number of special occasions. While we should be careful not to take this completely at face value, it supports the idea that sites like Abu Mina could be consistently busy. See for example Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Cure for Greek Maladies 8.62 (Efthymios Rizos, Cult of Saints, E03501 – http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E03501 [accessed January 2018]).

It is important to be critical of how we think about and understand this evidence for segregated space at Abu Mina. Gender segregation is often interpreted (from a modern, Western perspective) as an indicator of low female status within a simple framework of patriarchal oppression in which women are intentionally rendered invisible and subordinate to men.[61] While it is true that this practice is often based on misogynistic principles, it is not helpful to understand it in this purely negative light. The site offered women their own dedicated spaces for private functions such as sleeping and bathing, and this was probably no different from their experience at home. The provision of structurally segregated facilities merely underlines the large numbers of visiting female pilgrims: for permanent segregated buildings to be financially viable there must have been a steady stream of women in need of such services. What we should note is the context of these limited segregated spaces within the public act of pilgrimage: women could not easily be separated from men on the road, a fact that is highlighted by the repeated motif of attempted assault, and there is no evidence of any segregation in communal spaces where pilgrims gathered. The provision of these facilities made it logistically easier and safer for women to travel, as women-only spaces reduced the danger of assault, and the potential for malicious gossip. We might even go so far as to consider that women may have been the beneficiaries of the double baptistery.[62]

4   Evidence from Small Finds

Although the excavations at Abu Mina have yielded a huge number of small finds, the vast majority of publications over the last 50 years have focused on the architectural remains. When there is material published on small finds,

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61   See for example the analysis of responses by politicians, journalists and academics to an event at Melbourne University at which seating was segregated by gender. The practice was condemned as un-Australian and compared to racial segregation and apartheid (Amelia Johns and Michele Lobo, "'It's about freedom': contesting dominant representations of devout Muslim women in the space of the nation", *TASA 2013: Reflections, Intersections and Aspirations, 50 Years of Australian Sociology: Proceedings of TASA conference 2013* (Melbourne, 2013) pp. 1–17).

62   While there is no direct evidence to support this suggestion, there is also no proof that it benefited men rather than women. I propose this here because otherwise it is likely to be assumed that the larger font was used by men, and the smaller by women. I confess that this was my own initial assumption when writing this paper, however this way of thinking is ultimately contrary to an approach that is critical about gender and seeks to avoid making assumptions without proof that are based on presupposed gender hierarchies.

critical analysis is further frustrated by a lack of information, and the generality in which many types of finds are treated. 115 pieces of bronze jewellery are recorded, as well as 44 "kohl-sticks", many decorative hair pins (number unknown), and 18 spindle whorls, many of them decorated.[63] Twelve female bone figurines were also found, one of which may be a crudely formed bone doll, perhaps indicating the presence of female children.[64] Sadly find-spots are often unspecified, so we cannot use these small finds to bolster arguments for segregation of architectural areas. Grossmann records that there were hairdressers working in the double baths, and it may be from the small finds that he bases this assertion.[65] We can, however, draw useful information from artistic depictions of female pilgrims, and pilgrimage souvenirs.

The excavation report from the 1990 season recorded the discovery of a stele fragment depicting a female figure with outstretched hands, in the south-east annex of the Great Basilica.[66] No image is provided, nor is its publication elsewhere referenced, and no further mention of it seems to be made in subsequent reports. The description interprets her gesture as receiving or giving something from or to another person, who is no longer preserved.[67] The fragment was found along with architectural decoration which appears to have belonged in the Great Basilica, so it may be that it is part of a stele dedicated to Saint Menas. As there is no image of the fragment or more detailed description, it is difficult to say more, but it is a tantalising possibility of a record of a female donor, perhaps in gratitude for a miracle.

A small ivory *pyxis* in the British Museum, of disputed provenance but dating to the 6th century bears a relief image of Menas. From either side he welcomes supplicants: two women from the viewer's left, and two men from the right.[68] Interestingly, both women (and men), stretch their hands towards the saint. While this is an intriguing note, without access to the stele fragment any meaningful comparison of body posture between the two images is impossible. What is interesting is that the female pilgrims are equally as important as

63   Peter Grossmann and Iris Stollmayer, "Report on the excavations at Abū Mīnā in Spring 1999", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 39 (2000), pp. 108–111.

64   Josef Engemann, "Elfenbeinfunde aus Abu Mena/Ägypten", *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 30 (1987), p. 173.

65   Grossmann, *Abu Mina*, p. 20.

66   Peter Grossmann and Jacek Kościuk, "Report on the Excavations at Abu Mina in Autumn 1990" *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 31 (1992) p. 38.

67   Grossmann and Kościuk "Report on the Excavations at Abu Mina in Autumn 1990", p. 38.

68   Davis *The Cult of St Thecla,* p. 124; Kurt Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, third to seventh century* (New York, 1979) No. 514, pp. 575–576; BM 1879, 1220.1.

the male pilgrims. However, they are also maintained as two distinct groups, separated by the architecture of the shrine. If we understand this image to be an artistic expression of pilgrimage to Menas' cult that would be recognisable to visitors, then it confirms that women constituted a significant portion of pilgrims and reasserts gender separation when viewed in the context of the architectural remains. The importance of the foremost female figure is asserted by the way she looks out towards the viewer. Through her gaze and her gesture, she invites us to consider the saint and his shrine, a bold and authoritative posture; here is a woman taking an active part in Menas' cult, and urging the observer to do the same.

Finds of small terracotta statuettes of female figures are numerous from Abu Mina, with the excavations of Kaufmann alone producing some 50 heads and around 400 bodies and fragments.[69] Most of these statuettes are 15–20 cm tall, with examples made both in moulds and by hand.[70] Statuettes identified as having been made at Abu Mina are not just those found at the site itself, as the clay is easily identifiable by its pale-yellow fabric, and the figurines can also be identified on a typological basis. Examples produced at Abu Mina probably include figurines now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest,[71] and figurines from excavations at Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria.[72] There are several types of standing figure, either in *orans* pose or more commonly with one or both hands on a distinctive pregnant abdomen. Some figures hold a child or some unidentified object, and some seated figures hold a child according to the iconographical type of Isis *lactans* (Fig. 1.8). The quality of the surviving statuettes is variable, some are relatively crude, while others are more sensitively formed and have painted decoration.

The figurines' emphasis on pregnancy and childbirth allows us to conclude that they were linked to fertility.[73] The literary sources showed that Menas was

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69   Josef Engemann, *Abū Mīnā. vi. die Keramikfunde von 1965 bis 1998* (Wiesbaden, 2016), p. 119.

70   László Török, *Coptic Antiquities Vol. 1* (Rome, 1993), pp. 41, 43–44.

71   Török *Coptic Antiquities*, pp. 31, 41, 43 e.g. G42; Susan Bangert, "The Archaeology of Pilgrimage: Abu Mina and Beyond" in *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity,* eds. David Gwynn and Susan Bangert (Leiden, 2010) p. 307.

72   Malgorzata Martens, "Figurines en terre-cuite coptes. Découvertes à Kôm el-Dikka (Alexandrie)", *Bulletin. Société Archéologie d'Alexandrie* 43 (1975) pp. 53–56.

73   Josef Engemann, "Eulogien und Votive", *Akten des xii. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Bonn 1991* (1995), p. 231. On the flexible role and function of female figurines in Egypt see: David Frankfurter, "Female figurines in early Christian Egypt: reconstructing lost practices and meanings", *Material Religion* 11 (2015) pp. 190–223. He considers that at Abu Mina they may have functioned as both votives and souvenirs (pp. 202–203).

FIGURE 1.8   Selection of female figurines from Abu Mina
(CARL M. KAUFMANN, *DIE MENASSTADT UND DAS NATIONALHEILIGTUM DER ALTCHRISTLICHEN AEGYPTER IN DER WESTALEXANDRINISCHEN WÜSTE*, ERSTER BAND, (LEIPZIG, 1910),TAFEL 73)

known for healing sterility, and the figurines support the conclusion that he was known as a helper of women with reproductive health problems.[74] The function of these statuettes, however, is still debated. Kaufmann and Török considered them to be votives,[75] while Grossmann suggests that they may also have been souvenirs. He also posits that they may have been hung from nails on a plaster dome in the crypt, noting that similar figurines from Egypt had small holes on either side of the head, perhaps to facilitate transportation or display.[76] This is purely speculative, however, and the statuettes from Abu Mina show no evidence of being hung. In his recent publication of the ceramic finds, Engemann argues against their use as votives, noting that their find spots were distributed across the whole site, and that Kaufmann also made no mention of finding any votive deposits. Engemann considers it more likely the terracottas represent pilgrim souvenirs that were made and sold at the site.[77] While he notes that they have not been found as widely distributed as other souvenirs, such as the Menas flasks,[78] he counters this by remarking that other figurines from the site, notably the rider figurines, were not widely distributed either, but are accepted as functioning as souvenirs.[79] I would add to this the figurines which were probably made in Abu Mina but found in Alexandria, clear evidence of pilgrims taking these statuettes home from the site.[80] This also bolsters the assumption that many pilgrims were relatively local, as we have seen from the literary sources.

It therefore appears that the statuettes were probably pilgrimage "souvenirs" available to purchase from one of the numerous shops at the site, either

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74   Engemann *die Keramikfunde*, p. 120.

75   Carl M. Kaufmann *Altchristliche Frauenvotivstatuetten der Menasstadt und ihre paganen Vorbilder* (Berlin, 1918); Török *Coptic Antiquities,* p. 31; Engemann *die Keramikfunde*, p. 120.

76   Grossmann, "The Pilgrimage Center", p. 300; Török in *Coptic Antiquities* p. 33 notes that some similar figurines have attached earrings e.g. Klaus Wessel, *Koptische Kunst: Die Spätantike in Ägypten* (Recklinghausen, 1963) p. 95.

77   Engemann *die Keramikfunde*, p. 120.

78   William Anderson, "An Archaeology of Late Antique Pilgrim Flasks", *Anatolian Studies* 54 (2004), p. 81; Anderson mentions one near Liverpool, while others have been found in Romania and Hungary. It remains unclear, however, how these ampullae travelled to these places. See: Ion Barnea, "Menasampullen auf dem Gebiet rumäniens", *Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Bonn 1991* (Münster, 1995) pp. 509–514. Zoltán Kádár, "Die Menasampulle von Szombathely (Steinamanger, Ungarn) in Bezeihung zu anderen frühchristlichen Pilgerandenken", *Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Bonn 1991* (Münster, 1995) pp. 886–888; Susan Bangert, "Menas ampullae: a case study of long-distance contacts" in *Incipient Globalization? Long-Distance Contacts in the Sixth Century*, ed. A. Harris (2007) pp. 27–33.

79   Engemann *die Keramikfunde*, p. 120.

80   Martens "Figurines en terre-cuite coptes", pp. 53–56; Frankfurter "Female figurines" p. 203.

for the use of the pilgrim herself or to take home to friends or relatives that could not make the journey. We should be careful, however, not to understand this term "souvenir" strictly in the modern sense of an item purchased as a memento of a holiday. While these statuettes could certainly function to re-mind a pilgrim of her visit to Menas' shrine, it seems likely that possession of such an object also provided the owner with portable access to divine power.[81] Problems associated with fertility are complex and can potentially last for a significant length of time; while some miracle cures might be achieved instan-taneously (such as returning the sight of a blind person), successful concep-tion, pregnancy, and childbirth is a much longer process. Figurines of women who were pregnant and/or holding infants (and therefore manifestations of the wishes of the supplicant) could function to make sure that Menas' protec-tion remained with the woman throughout this prolonged period.

How this process operated, however, is debated. Vikan proposes a model of infinite transmission of power from a holy object/person to a souvenir through touch.[82] In this model a substance such as oil is passed over the relics of a saint, and through this physical contact becomes holy oil, ultimately deriving from Frazer's model of "sympathetic magic" where power is transferred through contagion.[83] Hunter-Crawley, however, notes that Vikan's infinite transferal model fails to consider that the transferal clearly stops at the human body: a person can be blessed by contact with such an object, but is not made sacred themselves.[84] She proposes that objects were able to reveal divine power (which is by nature infinite), and that access to this was repeatedly triggered by sensory experience of the object.[85] While I agree that a holy object can act as a stimulus for access to divine power, there must be some kind of transferal of power in order to make that object holy in the first place. At Abu Mina this could be achieved by the production of the figurines from local clay, imbuing the object with the power of Saint Menas due to the material's physical

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81   I am grateful to one of the anonymous reviewers who pointed out the ambiguity of the term "souvenir" in this context. See also: Gary Vikan, *Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art* (Washington, 2010), p. 13 on the specific meaning of "souvenir", and Georgia Frank, "*Loca Sancta* Souvenirs and the Art of Memory" in *Pèlerinages et Lieux Saints dans L'Antiquité et le Moyen Âge: Mélanges Offerts à Pierre Maraval*, eds. B. Caseau, J. Cheynet, and V. Déroche (Paris, 2006) pp. 193–201 on the construction of memory from images on pilgrim "souvenirs".

82   Vikan *Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*, pp. 24–25.

83   James G. Frazer *The Golden Bough, A new abridgement* ed. R. Fraser from the 2nd and 3rd editions (Oxford, 2009), p. 26.

84   Heather Hunter-Crawley, *Divine Embodiment: Ritual, Art and the Senses in Late-Antique Christianity* (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol, 2013), p. 159.

85   Hunter-Crawley *Divine Embodiment,* pp. 159–162.

proximity to his burial place. This process is similar to the apples from the orchard of Saint John received by Egeria as *eulogia* in the 4th century which had sacred power because they had grown in soil thought to have a direct connection to a holy figure.[86] The figurines could then function to make the fertility power of the saint portable, and accessible to women even after their visit to the shrine.

The small finds discussed above help to contextualise female experience of pilgrimage, and support conclusions drawn from the architectural and literary evidence. The artistic representations give us a picture of women actively engaged with the cult of Menas. Further evidence of this is the fact that it appears that the stele fragment was part of a donation to the main church, and commemorated women engaging with the site. This is also supported by the ivory *pyxis*, which shows female pilgrims as equally important as male pilgrims, even placed to the right hand of the saint himself. The inner woman looks out at the viewer, inviting us to engage with the image, just as she is engaging with the cult herself, showing a female pilgrim with an active role to play. The female statuettes provide some indication of why some women sought Menas' help: their focus on pregnancy and children, and Menas' association with miracles of fertility allow us to conclude that women visited the shrine for help with reproductive health. The likely function of these statuettes as souvenirs, and their production from local clay, made sure the power of Saint Menas could stay with them even after their initial visit. Other small miscellaneous finds attest to the large numbers of women in the town, whether locals or pilgrims, and help to justify the extensive public facilities available.

The small finds also help us to understand who these female pilgrims were. Studies of late antique women often conclude that virtuous Christian women lived in enforced domesticity bordering on seclusion, and that to move freely in public women would have to forfeit their social status as "honourable women" and render it akin to barmaids and prostitutes.[87] While it is generally accepted that virginity offered women an option outside of this closeted marital life during this period, this is largely treated as the exception that proves the rule.[88] By this logic women only gained certain opportunities by supposedly denying (and therefore transcending) their female identity, and in the process

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86   *Egeria's Travels* 15.6, trans. John Wilkinson (England, 1981) p. 111.

87   Joyce Salisbury, *Church fathers, independent virgins* (London, 1991), p. 84; Jöelle Beaucamp in Glen W. Bowerstock, et al. *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 750.

88   Both Salisbury (*Church fathers*, pp. 83–96) and Smith ("Sacred Journeying", p. 43) state that it was virginity that allowed women the ability to travel, and that this opportunity was denied to other women.

becoming quasi-male.[89] Widows and older women could also have significant means and authority in their own right, and are therefore another social group that we might expect to have more freedom to travel and interact with the public sphere.[90] It seems no coincidence that many of the well-known women who historically formed the basis for our understanding of female pilgrimage were widows.[91] The evidence from Abu Mina, however, challenges the view that travel was limited to groups such as these, and therefore primarily linked to marital or sexual status. Women were visiting Abu Mina because they had anxiety about bearing children, and this means that these women were neither virgins nor widows, but mostly likely married women of childbearing age. While we cannot identify direct evidence for young women awaiting marriage (who might be expected to experience stricter social restrictions) it suggests that broad swathes of the female population took part in pilgrimage, not just those with the relative freedom of virginity or widowhood.

5   Conclusion

This case study has shown that pilgrimage was not limited to a few elite women, but that the "ordinary" women of the middle- and lower-classes made up a large proportion of the pilgrim population at Abu Mina. Their presence is illustrated through gendered space, small finds, and an awareness of female pilgrims in the literary sources, while the sheer number of female travellers is further indicated by the construction of permanent segregated facilities, and the formation of an infrastructure and literary narrative framed around women's needs and anxieties. We have also seen that the female pilgrims visiting the site were mostly local people undertaking relatively short journeys, and that pilgrimage to Saint Menas was not restricted to women with the special status of virgins or widows. While we should resist generalisations, this suggests that there was not a fundamental societal hostility to "women" travelling or undertaking a pilgrimage (at least in this region), but that instead a woman's individual circumstances was the dominant factor in determining if she would become a pilgrim.

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89   Salisbury *Church fathers*, p. 93.

90   Studies of women participating in the modern Muslim Hajj have also noted that older women have less restrictions placed on them by the conservative Saudi state. Asma Sayeed, "Women and the Hajj", in *The Hajj Pilgrimage in Islam* eds. E. Tagliacozzo and S.M. Toorawa (New York, 2016), p. 249.

91   For example: Paula and Melania the Elder.

The ubiquity of female pilgrimage to Abu Mina is reflected in the attitude of the site itself towards female travellers. The economic nature of pilgrimage necessitated an awareness of the needs of visitors in terms of providing amenities and commercial products, and this is illustrated in both the archaeological and literary record. Abu Mina recognised the importance of women as a specific visitor demographic, and actively catered to them through the provision of segregated facilities, female-oriented souvenirs, and literary narratives that dealt with female anxieties. This gender segregation functioned to make it easier for women to negotiate the logistics of pilgrimage in a socially acceptable way. The wealth of evidence from this single case study helps to illustrate the complexity of the pilgrimage economy at Abu Mina, and indicates that this analysis is just a starting point; women were present at pilgrimage sites, but in most cases we are simply not looking for them. It is likely that Abu Mina was not an anomaly in providing these amenities, but is simply well-excavated and published in comparison to other sites. The relationship between the pilgrimage site and its female visitors was complex and interdependent: the movement of women as pilgrims created a gap in the market for products, services, and even literary narratives that suited their needs, while these systems in turn made it more desirable and logistically easier for women to visit the site. This complex interaction between the infrastructure of pilgrimage sites, the texts such sites inspired or produced, and the people themselves who visited them is little explored but is vital for understanding late antique pilgrimage.

The evidence from Abu Mina suggests that for many women leaving the *domus* for an extended period, being publically visible on the road and at the shrine and expressing piety in this public manner was compatible with being a pious and virtuous woman. This challenges the ideal constructed by elite men in antiquity that the lives of virtuous Christian women should be confined to the home, and the uncritical acceptance of this as general practice in much modern scholarship. While pilgrimage would only constitute a small facet of women's religious lives, this analysis suggests that we need to reorient our understanding of female pilgrimage and travel away from elite literary ideals (both ancient and modern), and frame it instead around critical methodologies of gender that incorporate a wide range of evidence.

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CHAPTER 2

Travelling Painters' Workshops in the Late Antique Levant: Preliminary Observations

Julia Burdajewicz

Unlike objects of minor arts, wall paintings and monumental art may only be executed and viewed *in situ*. Nevertheless, even though they are anchored to a permanent architectural setting, they generate movement. First, it is the movement of their creators who, after completing the project at one site may move on to another location. Secondly, it is the transmission of artistic concepts which occurs through the traveling artists.

The Levantine provinces of Palaestina, Phoenicia, and Arabia were witnesses to an intensified construction and artistic activity which began with Constantine's reign (AD 306–337), reached its peak in the sixth century, and gradually decreased after the Islamic conquest (AD 634–638), and which was driven by the rapid establishment and development of numerous places of Christian worship.[1] However, despite the extensive construction of ecclesiastical centers and pilgrimage facilities attested by archaeological research, the activity of painters in this area and period is an obscure and almost unexplored subject. In fact, the only surviving evidence of their existence are remains of wall paintings found on archaeological sites, yet those are usually too fragmentarily preserved to inspire in-depth studies on their creators and creation processes. This paper examines various types of records (i.e., archaeological findings, including the new discoveries from Porphyreon, literary sources, and results of technical examinations[2] of wall paintings) in attempt to shed some light on the activity and itinerancy of painters' workshops in the Levant between the fourth and eighth century. The conclusions of these considerations show how the demand for craftspeople, and painters in particular, alongside technical changes in the execution of paintings, as well as the use of pattern books, contributed to the circulation of people and the transmission of ideas in the Late Antique Levant.

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1   Yoram Tsafrir, ed., *Ancient Churches Revealed* (Jerusalem, 1993).

2   Technical considerations included in this paper result from a research project by the present author *Technical study of wall paintings in the Middle East in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine period* funded by the National Science Center in Poland based on decision no. DEC-2014/15/N/HS3/01776.

Due to the scarcity of archaeological evidence and historical sources on the activity of artists from the period and area in question, I find it necessary to begin with an overview of evidence on workshop practices of painters of the Roman period. These practices, which have been relatively well-researched, serve as a starting point and comparative material for our considerations on the *modi operandi* of the Late Antique painters. Next, we shall discuss how the growth of imperial and private foundations in the Late Antique Levant might have animated the wall painting market and stimulated the movement of artists, within both the local and the trans-provincial range. Moving on to the archaeological records of the activity of Late Antique wall painters, I will present a unique and thus far only partially published assemblage of wall paintings from Porphyreon (modern-day Jiyeh, Lebanon). The paintings significantly expand the modest *corpus* of surviving Late Antique wall paintings from the Levant and contribute to our understanding of the workshop practices and the itinerancy of painters. The findings of the study on the technique of execution of the wall paintings from Porphyreon along with technical examinations of remains of wall paintings from several other sites, provide evidence of the shifts in the technique of execution of the murals, which seem to have occurred in the Late Antiquity, and which likely influenced the organization of painters' work and their mobility. Finally, the disputable existence of pattern books is addressed, their circulation with the traveling painters, and their potential role in the transmission of Early Christian iconography.

1   Painters' Workshops in Roman Antiquity

A workshop may be defined as a team of artists or craftsmen who create objects of material and artistic culture, which are characterized, and thus, recognizable, by certain features.[3] These features comprise iconography and subject matter of the artwork on the one hand (for example, when a workshop favors or specializes in specific motifs and designs), and technique of execution, on the other. These two aspects of artistic creation represent two kinds of knowledge that the artist should possess, namely semantic and technical knowledge. The third factor which determines the outcome of artistic creation is the skill, the talent, and sensitivity of an individual artist, which may reveal themselves, for example, in the brushwork, mixing of the colors, or style of the drawing.

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3 Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Mosaic Pavements. Themes, Issues, and Trends* (Leiden, Boston, 2009), pp. 243–244.

While some art historians rely chiefly on brushwork and style when attempting to identify the works of individual workshops or artists,[4] all of these three aspects, that is the iconography, the manner of execution, and individual artists' hallmarks, should be equally considered in studies on wall paintings. Such a research approach may be well adapted to investigations of Roman period wall paintings, their creators, and organization of their work, thanks to the abundance of surviving archaeological evidence and historical written records.

The Romano-Campanian wall paintings alongside those discovered throughout the provinces of the Roman empire demonstrate a wide array of subjects, from mythological or historical scenes, through genre painting, satiric, erotic motifs, to representations of nature or geometric ornaments. It appears that workshops may have favored and specialized in certain subjects which are oftentimes regarded by scholars as "hallmarks", allowing the identification of products of a particular workshop.[5]

The recurrence and popularity of certain subjects or motifs throughout the empire is often explained through the supposed circulation of pattern books, even though none such book has been recovered thus far.[6] At the same time, a huge diversity of motifs and of their combinations, which can be observed in surviving wall paintings, suggest that the pattern books, if they existed, were not meant to be precisely copied from, but were used for inspiration or guidance, or as a catalog to be shown to a patron.[7]

The relatively good condition of Roman wall paintings which are brought to light by archaeologists is due to the manner of their execution, which should be understood both as preparation of the substrate layers (mortars and plasters) and execution of the paint layers. Even though Vitruvius' famous

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4   E.g. Hendrik G. Beyen, "The Workshops of the 'Fourth Style' at Pompeii and in Its Neighbourhood (1)", *Mnemosyne*, Fourth Series, Vol. 4, Fasc. 3/4 (1951), pp. 235–257. For critical comments on Beyen's conclusions see Roger Ling, *Roman Painting* (Cambridge, Eng. 1991), p. 216. Also see Lawrence Richardson, *A Catalog of Identifiable Figure Painters of Ancient Pompeii* (Baltimore, Mary., 2000).

5   Ling, *Roman Painting*, p. 216.

6   See, for example, John R. Clarke, "Model-book, outline-book, figure-book: new observations on the creation of near-exact copies in Roman-Campanian paintings" in *Atti del X Congresso Internazionale Dell'AIPMA* (*Association Internationale Pour La Peinture Murale Antique*), *Napoli 17–21 Settembre 2007*, Vol. 1, ed. Irene Bragantini (Naples, 2010), pp. 203–214. For further discussion on pattern books see below.

7   For example, in Herculaneum and Pompeii characteristic combinations of particular motifs of the decorative repertory allowed to track down activity of a few local workshops; see Ling, *Roman Painting*, p. 215.

guidelines,[8] recommending coating the wall with six layers of lime-based plaster containing specially selected aggregates, were rarely followed, archaeometric studies demonstrate that Roman paintings were generally consistent in terms of the technique of execution.[9] Such consistency suggests that the workshops were well organized and that they shared professional knowledge on the execution of wall paintings as they presumably did on iconography via pattern books.

The organization of workshops' procedures was much influenced by the principal painting technique employed by the Roman artists, namely the *fresco*. In this technique, the paint is executed on a freshly applied, damp layer of plaster. It is essential that the painting is completed before the plaster sets in order to achieve durability and brilliance of the colors. This means that the plasterer and the painter had to work almost simultaneously and to divide their work into stages that can be completed within one day.[10] A unique depiction of such a team at work, involving a plasterer, a painter, an assistant preparing the materials, and possibly, the master-painter consulting a scroll with a project, decorates a funerary stele preserved at the Museum of Sens.[11] A number of unfinished paintings recovered in Pompeii disclose subsequent stages of this process.[12] Furthermore, a careful eye may sometimes spot certain marks on the paintings left by the plasterers' and painters' utensils, such as strings, rulers, compasses or even their own hands.[13] Such, and other kinds of tools are occasionally found on archaeological excavations.[14]

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8   Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture,* transl. M. Hicky Morgan (Cambridge, Mass., 1914), VII, 3.5–3.7.

9   General works on the Roman painting technique: Alix Barbet, Claude Allag,"Techniques de préparation des parois dans la peinture murale romaine", *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Antiquité* 84, No. 2 (1972), pp. 935–1070; Ling, *Roman painting*, pp. 198–211; *Roman wall painting: materials, techniques, analysis and conservation: proceedings of the International Workshop, Fribourg 7–9 March 1996*, ed. Hamdallah Béarat (Fribourg, 1997). Over the past two decades numerous studies on wall paintings and plasters from individual sites have been published in archaeometric journals.

10   *Giornata di lavoro*, or the "golden hour" within which the work has to be completed usually lasts between 6 and 8 hours depending on air temperature and humidity.

11   Anne-Marie Uffler, "Fresquistes gallo-romains: le bas-relief du Musee de Sens", *Revue archéologique de l'est et du centre-est*, 22, Fasc. 3,4 (1971), pp. 393–401.

12   E.g. in the House of the Iliadic Shrine or in the House of the Painters at Work at Pompei. Ling, *Roman Painting*, p. 202.

13   For various marks left by the painters see Alix Barbet, "Traces fortuites ou intentionnelles sur les peintures murals antiques", *Syria* 77 (2000), pp. 169–180.

14   Ling, *Roman Painting*, p. 200, figs 218–219. Bowls with pigments were found for example in Pompeii (on view at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples) or in the so-called *officina pigmentaria* in the palace at Massada (on view at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem):

This material evidence is complemented by historical texts which describe correct methods of work, recommended raw materials for preparation of substrate layers and paints, and their costs.[15] Furthermore, Diocletian's Edict on Maximum Prices (AD 301) testifies to two categories of painters.[16] A figure painter, *Pictor imaginarus* was responsible for depicting figural scenes; therefore, one may assume, he was skilled in a naturalistic rendering of human figures, faithful capturing of the movement, and was able to achieve a broad palette of colors by mixing base pigments.[17] A wall painter, *Pictor parietarius*, executed backgrounds and subordinate decorations such as geometric motifs or floral elements. This difference in responsibilities, and possibly, in skills displayed by both types of artist, was reflected by their wage. At the time of issuing the Edict, the figure painter could be paid up to 150 *denarii* per day, while the wall painter could earn only half of this amount.

2   Painters' Workshops in the Antique and Late Antique Levant

The art of wall painting spread to the Eastern Mediterranean during the Hellenistic period and appears to have flourished under Roman rule, as attested by remains of wall paintings found in temples, theaters, bathhouses, private residences, and necropolises of the Levant.[18] At the time of the Roman conquest, the major cities of the provinces of *Palaestina*, *Phoenicia*, and *Arabia* must have had long established local workshops. Nevertheless, both the iconography and the technique of execution of recovered examples from the Roman East indicate an inflow of artistic ideas and transfer of workshop practices from the center of the empire.

Silvia Rozenberg, "Pigments and fresco fragments from Herod's Palace at Jericho", in *Roman wall painting: materials, techniques, analysis and conservation: proceedings of the International Workshop, Fribourg 7–9 March 1996*, ed. Hamdallah Béarat, (Fribourg, 1997), pp. 63–74.

15   The two principal texts are the *Natural History* by Pliny the Elder who lists and describes various pigments used for paintings as well as their prices, and Vitruvius' *The Ten Books on Architecture* whose Chapter VII covers both the materials and preparation of substrate layers and the pigments.

16   *Edict. Diocl.* 7.6–7: Marta Giacchero, *Edictum Diocletiani et Collegarum de pretiis rerum venalium* (Genoa, 1974), pp. 1510–1511.

17   For identified figure painters in the Pompeii area see Richardson, *A Catalog*.

18   However, rare examples of wall paintings are known also from as early as the second millennium BC. E.g. Eric H. Cline, Assaf Yasur-Landau, Nurith Goshen, "New Fragments of Aegean-Style Painted Plaster from Tel Kabri, Israel", *American Journal of Archaeology* 115, No. 2 (2011), pp. 245–261.

The most important commissions might have been executed by artists summoned from afar to carry out the works. Authorship of itinerant painters, *pictori pelegrini*, has been suggested in case of wall decorations of the Herodian palaces[19] based on the use of luxurious materials, such as marble powder and cinnabar.[20] The activities of local Levantine workshops have not been investigated thus far.[21] Nevertheless, it would seem logical to presume that indigenous workshops offered their services in major cities of the provinces and would also travel within a local range, for example, to decorate countryside villas of the patrons.

The paucity of evidence on the functioning of painters' workshops in the Roman Levant inevitably affects our understanding of this phenomenon in the Late Antique period. We may speculate that earlier artistic practices and the organization of work generally held good in Late Antiquity. However, a number of cultural, religious and political shifts which occurred in the Late Antiquity might have stirred up the market of mural art in the eastern provinces, imposed changes to painters' work, and possibly, stimulated their movement.

3   Itinerancy of Painters in Light of Construction Activities in the Late Antique Levant

Following the decriminalization of Christianity in AD 313, the provinces of Palaestina, Phoenicia, and Arabia became some of the most important areas of the Christian world. Churches, sanctuaries, and monasteries soon commemorated the main holy sites related to events from the lives of Jesus and the apostles. Many of these religious complexes were imperial foundations, and two major imperial building campaigns largely shaped the artistic and architectural landscape of the Late Antique Levant. The first one was carried out by Constantine the Great who, after assuming undivided rule in the East, erected the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem; *Eleona* Church on the Mt. of Olives, the Church at the Oak and Spring of Mamre near Hebron in ca. AD 333, and

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19   Rozenberg, "Pigments and fresco fragments", p. 70.

20   Cinnabar was the most expensive pigment known to Roman period artists and its mining was under strict state control. Cinnabar as a mercury-based pigment is not suitable for paintings executed on lime-based plaster, hence its application in *fresco* technique required special knowledge. Howell G.M. Edwards, Denis W. Farwell, Silvia Rozenberg, "Raman spectroscopic study of red pigment and fresco fragments from King Herod's Palace at Jericho", *Journal of Raman spectroscopy* 30, No. 5 (1999), pp. 361–366.

21   The issue of painters' workshops was touched upon in case of a Roman period tomb in Marwa (Jordan): Chester C. McCown, "A Painted Tomb at Marwa", *The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 9 (1942), pp. 24–26.

finally, in ca. AD 336 began the construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.[22] That particular foundation was supposed to excel all "the fairest structures in any city of the empire",[23] both in terms of architecture and the details of the building, "for it is fitting that the most marvelous place in the world should be worthily decorated".[24] Unfortunately, little architectural tissue of the Constantinian basilica has survived, having been partially destroyed and overgrown by later structures, hence we may only speculate about the character of the interior decoration.

Taking into consideration Constantine's own declaration in Eusebius' text, to make it the most magnificent building in the empire, we may assume that the leading artists were engaged in its decoration. Regrettably, we do not know whether local workshops were involved in this commission, or the craftspeople were called from afar. In the case of a large city such as Jerusalem, we may imagine that, by the fourth century, it had some established painting workshops ready to offer their services. Nevertheless, many of the other shrines were erected in locations that were previously of little administrative or cultural importance, such as Bethlehem or Nazareth, and which probably did not have professional artists who could meet the level of an imperial commission. Therefore, the movement of the architects, mosaicists, and painters to such places seems indispensable.

Somewhat more abundant than in case of Constantine's projects are archaeological and written testimonies of foundations of the second great emperor-builder of the pre-iconoclastic age. Construction undertakings by Justinian (AD 527–565) described by Procopius of Caesarea in *De aedificiis* comprise an impressive list of 43 churches, hospices, utilitarian (cisterns and wells) or defensive structures erected or renovated by the emperor in the Holy Land.[25] In Jerusalem and its environs alone, Justinian restored 13 churches and erected the *Nea Ecclesia*.

Great numbers of architects, artisans and artists must have been involved in Justinian's projects, which may imply that local human resources constituted the major part of the teams, possibly led by established craftspeople from regional urban centers. For example, the letter of Eutychius, a 9th/10th century patriarch of Alexandria, tells us that Justinian sent a delegate to the prefect of

22   Gregory T. Armstrong, "Constantine's Churches: Symbol and Structure", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 33, No.1 (Mar 1974), 5–16.

23   Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 3.30, 31; ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1 (repr. Grand Rapids, 1961), p. 528.

24   Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 3.30, 31, p. 528.

25   Procopius, *On Buildings* 5.6.1–5.9.33, trans. Henry B. Dewing, with the collaboration of Glanville Downey (London, 1940); see also Glanville Downey, "Justinian as a Builder", *Art Bulletin* 32 (1950), pp. 262–266.

Egypt commanding him to provide the necessary resources, people, and supplies for the edification of the Monastery of the Burning Bush on Sinai.[26] The Monastery was erected by an architect from the broader Sinai area, Stephanos of Aila (modern day Aqaba). One-meter high granite capitals with carved vegetal motifs supporting the arcades of the nave of the church exhibit traits of a local sculptors' workshop. However, in the case of the centerpiece of the internal decoration, the mosaic of Transfiguration, the authorship is debatable. It has been suggested that artists from Constantinople might have executed it,[27] however, an Egyptian origin for the craftspeople is also a possibility.[28] Involvement of artists from the capital is also presumed in the imperially funded building activity in Dara and Resafa.[29]

Aside from imperial foundations, numerous building initiatives by local benefactors took place and animated the market for monumental art between the fifth and seventh centuries. Cathedrals, *martyria*, churches dedicated to various saints, and monasteries were erected and decorated at the expense of bishops or local private donors. A panegyric in honor of bishop Marcianus by Choricius of Gaza, which offers enthusiastic praise for the bishops' generosity and good taste in arts and architecture is an excellent testimony of such funding activity.[30] Furthermore, even though no dedicatory inscriptions executed in wall paintings are known, inscriptions surviving on mosaic pavements reflect the scope of input of local donors in decorating ecclesiastic interiors.[31] In fact, some of these mosaic inscriptions seem to refer to the overall decoration of the interiors, including mural paintings.[32] Occasionally these inscriptions reveal the origin of the artists.[33]

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26 "Eutychii patriarchae Alexandrini *Annales*" in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graecan* 111, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (Paris, 1863), pp. 1071–1072.

27 Kurt Weitzmann, "*Loca Sancta* and the representational arts of the Palestine", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974), pp. 33–34.

28 Liz James, *Mosaics in the Medieval World. From Late Antiquity to the Fifteen Century* (Cambridge, Eng., 2017), p. 225.

29 Finbarr B. Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus. Studies on the Makings of an Umayyad Visual Culture* (Leiden, Boston, Köln, 2001), p. 74.

30 Choricius of Gaza, *Laudatio Marciani* I, II, trans. Cyril Mango, *The art of the Byzantine empire. Sources and documents* (Toronto, 1986), pp. 60–72.

31 Mark Merrony, *Socio-economic aspects of Late Roman mosaic pavements in Phoenicia and northern Palestine* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 101–128.

32 For references to wall decorations appearing in mosaic pavement inscriptions from the churches of Gerasa see: Basema Hamarneh, "The visual dimension of sacred space: wall mosaics in the byzantine churches of Jordan. A reassessment", in *Atti del 12° Colloquio AIEMA* (*Venezia, 11–15 settembre 2012*), ed. Giordana Trovabene (Verona, 2015), pp. 239–248.

33 For example, an inscription in church of er-Rashidiya in *Palaestina Tertia* is signed by a mosaicist, Andrew of Jerusalem. Lea Di Segni, "Varia Arabica. Greek Inscriptions from

A few literary sources record artisans and artists specializing in various disciplines who traveled for commissions. For example, for the construction of the Cathedral of Gaza (AD 402–407) bishop Porphyry "had engaged the architect Rufinus from Antioch, a dependable and expert man" who has overseen and completed the edification.[34] Emperor Anastasius (AD 491–518) is said to have brought a Syrian Manichaean painter from Cyzicus to Constantinople to decorate the Helenianae palace and the nearby church of St. Stephen.[35] Furthermore, he sent mosaicists to decorate the Mar Gabriel Monastery at Kartmin.[36] Meanwhile, Theodoret of Cyrrus, a town located to the north of Aleppo, sent a talented carpenter, "the best member of the profession" to Antioch to adorn the house of scholar Isocasius.[37] These examples show that benefactors, regardless of their position and function, were willing to engage and recommended, reliable and skilled artists even from afar in order to ensure the quality of the artistic or architectural creation.

Finally, besides foundations related to Christian cult or commissioned by Christian patrons, a new group of patrons emerged at the turn of the seventh century, that is the Umayyad dynasty. Textual sources claim that the Umayyads summoned artists and artisans from various areas of the caliphate to carry out the architectural and decorative projects of major foundations.[38] For example, artisans from Egypt were called to work on the edification and adornment of buildings in Damascus and Jerusalem, while eighty Coptic and Greek artists from Egypt and Syria participated in rebuilding the mosque in Medina. Another hypothesis maintains that mosaic decorations of the Great Mosque in Damascus and the mosque in Medina were carried out by Byzantine mosaicists with the use of tesserae produced in the Byzantine empire.[39] Unfortunately, literary sources are silent about the painters who worked for the Umayyads, for

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Jordan", in Michele Piccirillo, "Ricerca Storico-Archeologica in Giordania", *Liber Annuus* 56 (2006), 578–592.

34   Mark the Deacon, *Life of Porphyry*, ch. 78. trans. Mango, *The art*, p. 31.

35   Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor,* trans. Cyril Mango, Roger Scott, Goeffrey Greatrex (Oxford, 1997), p. 229.

36   The identity and origin of the mosaicists is unknown. Ernest J.W. Hawkins, Marlia C. Mundell, Cyril Mango, "The Mosaics of the Monastery of Mār Samuel, Mār Simeon, and Mār Gabriel near Kartmin with A Note on the Greek Inscription", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 27 (1973), p. 280.

37   Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Epistulae* 38 (34), trans. Mango, *The art*, p. 51.

38   Garth Fowden, Elisabeth Key Fowden, *Studies on Hellenism, Christianity and the Umayyads* (Athens, 2004), pp. 123–124.

39   Discussion on the identity of the mosaicists and the origin of materials is presented by James in *Mosaics in the Medieval World*, pp. 264–269.

example, in Qusayr Amra,[40] Khirbet al-Mafjar,[41] or Qasr el-Heir el-Gharbi.[42] Nevertheless, the iconography and style of complex pictorial programs of the Qusayr Amra desert castle steeped in the Hellenistic-Roman culture seem to support a hypothesis that these wall paintings were executed by itinerant artists, possibly of Coptic origin.[43] Alternatively, it has been suggested that the paintings might have been associated with artistic schools active in the area of Madaba and Umm er-Rasas, towns located within a 75 km radius from Qusayr Amra.[44]

4   The Wall Paintings from Porphyreon

Unfortunately, very little material evidence for the production of painters' workshops survives from the period between the fifth and seventh century. Some of the better-preserved examples include a depiction of Transfiguration which once decorated the southern apse of the southern church at Shivta (early 6th century),[45] a depiction of three *orans* saints and jeweled crosses found in Caesarea (6th/7th century),[46] and the remains of a representation of a sitting bearded saint with a book from the church of Priest Wa'il at Umm ar-Rasas (late 6th century).[47] In addition, a bust of Christ, painted imitations of marble

40   Claude Vibert-Guigue, "Les Omeyyades et l'art de la peinture murale", *Les Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes* 49–50 (2006–2007), pp. 161–175. Garth Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra: art and the Umayyad elite in late antique Syria* (Berkeley, 2004).

41   R.W. Hamilton, Oleg Grabar, *Khirbet al Mafjar: An Arabian Mansion in the Jordan Valley* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 294–326.

42   Daniel Schlumberger, "Deux Fresques Omeyyades", *Syria* 25 (1946–1948), pp. 86–102. The paintings decorated the floors.

43   Mab van Lohuizen-Mulder, "Frescos in the Muslim residence and bathhouse Qusayr 'Amra", *BaBesch* (Annual Papers on Mediterranean Archaeology) 73 (1998), pp. 126–127.

44   Fowden, Key Fowden, *Studies in Hellenism*, p. 125. The authors put forward this hypothesis on the basis of the town's characteristic complex floor mosaics, a tradition which continued throughout the Umayyad period. The presence of painters' workshops in these two centers of intensified artistic production is therefore probable.

45   Pau Figueras, "Remains of a Mural Painting of the Transfiguration in the Southern Church of Sobata (Shivta)", *ARAM* 18–19 (2007), pp. 127–151.

46   Tamar Avner, "Early Byzantine wall-paintings from Caesarea", in *Caesarea papers 2: Herod's temple, the provincial governor's Praetorium and granaries, the later harbor, a gold coin hoard, and other studies,* (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series) 35, eds Kenneth G. Holum, Avner Raban, Joseph Patrich, (Portsmouth, R.I., 1999), pp. 108–128.

47   Michele Piccirillo, "La Chiesa del prete Wa'il a Umm al-Rasas – Kastron Mefaa in Giordania", in: *Early Christianity in Context. Monuments and Documents*, eds Frédéric Manns, Eugenio Alliata, Emmanuele Testa, (Jerusalem, 1993, repr. 2002), p. 318, figs. 13–14, col. pl. 5.

revetment and wall hanging, and possibly a scene of Ascension decorated the
"Church cluster" of the Monastery of Deir Muqallik (5th–7th century).[48]
A large cross inside a medallion amid vegetal scrolls was the centerpiece of the
semi-dome of the apse of a chapel adjacent to the Basilica A at Resafa, while
geometric designs decorated the under-arches of its windows, and painted
imitation of marble occupied the lower portion of its walls (6th century).[49] In
the Sanctuary of Lot at Deir 'Ain Abata (6th–7th century), a red cross was de-
picted on one of the columns in the church, while small fragments of figural
depictions were found in the debris.[50] A fragment of a face and some pieces of
plaster representing geometric patterns were discovered in the Northern
Church at Rehovot-in-the-Negev.[51] Two ashlars from the church in Zahrani re-
tained patches of plaster with depictions of a bird adoring a cross and a bird
facing a wreath (5th/6th century).[52] A fragment of a medallion and simplistic
depictions of plants with red flowers survived in the so-called Grotto of Conon
in Nazareth (5th–7th century).[53] Various geometric patterns decorated the
martyrium and the *diakonikon* of the North-West Church at Sussita (6th to
mid-8th century).[54] Unfortunately, these few examples, preserved in fragmen-
tary state and scattered throughout the Levant, do not permit any comparative
analysis. Neither do they suffice to determine authorship or to illustrate any
stylistic or technical idiosyncrasies of the workshops that produced them.

However, an assemblage of fragments of wall paintings found on a coastal
site of Jiyeh in Lebanon may shed new light on the question of the activity and
itinerancy of Late Antique painters in the Levant.[55] The site, identified with

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48   Haim Goldfus, Ben Arubas, Eugenio Alliata. "The Monastery of St. Teoctistus (Deir Muqal-
      lik)", *Liber Annuus* 45 (1995), pp. 265, 272, 279–280, 283, figs 10–12, 16.

49   Thilo Ulbert, *Resafa II. Die Basilika des Heiligen Kreuzes in Resafa-Sergiupolis* (Mainz am
      Rhein, 1986), pp. 87, 91–93, figs 52, 56d, 57, pls 33.1, 36.2.

50   Konstantinos D. Politis, *Sanctuary of Lot at Deir 'Ain 'Abata in Jordan. Excavations 1988–
      2003* (Amman, 2012), p. 369, col. pl. 44–46.

51   Yoram Tsafrir, "The Northern Church", in *Excavations at Rehovot-in-the-Negev, I: The North-
      ern Church*, (Qedem) 25, eds Yoram Tsafrir, Joseph Patrich, Renate Rosenthal-Heginbottom,
      Israel Hershkovitz, Yehuda D. Nevo, (Jerusalem, 1988), pp. 64–67, figs 94–97.

52   Maurice Chéhab, *Mosaïques du Liban* (Paris, 1957–1959), p. 91, pl. 42.

53   Jean Briand, *The Judeo-Christian Church of Nazareth* (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 30–32.

54   Julia Burdajewicz, "Wall Painting Decoration from the North-West Church in Hippos-
      Sussita of the Decapolis", *Études et Travaux* 30 (2017), pp. 161–180.

55   The site was excavated in 1975 and 1988 by the Lebanese Directorate General of Antiqui-
      ties and more recently, by an archaeological mission of the Polish Center for Mediterra-
      nean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw under direction of Dr. Tomasz Waliszews-
      ki. The majority of discovered paintings come from the excavation campaigns of 1975 and
      1988 which, having been carried out during the Lebanese Civil War, were not accompa-
      nied by proper documentation. A brief account on remains of wall paintings discovered
      in the residential district of Porphyreon in 1975 is given by Roger Saidah, "Porphyréon du

ancient Porphyreon[56] was a small semi-rural settlement which flourished during the fifth and sixth century. Probably towards the end of the fifth century,[57] a large basilica was constructed. It is the second largest[58] currently known Early Christian church in the province of *Phoenicia Maritima* (ca. 21 x 40 m. measured on the inner walls), and its scale stands in contrast to the rather small and simple dwellings of the residential parts of Porphyreon. Procopius lists a Porphyreon among the sites at which Justinian financed construction or renovation of churches and pilgrims' facilities,[59] but it is unclear, whether he means the Porphyreon in modern-day Lebanon, or another site with this toponym, located to the south of Haifa.[60]

The basilica in Porphyreon was decorated with wall paintings, mosaic floors,[61] marble wall revetments[62] and a wall mosaic,[63] a repertoire of artistic techniques which indicates a considerable financial input of the commissioners. Furthermore, wall paintings were discovered in several secular, residential buildings.

The wall paintings are preserved only fragmentarily, on patches of plaster still adhering to faces of masonry members from the collapsed buildings. Many elements have not survived or have deteriorated soon after the excavation due to poor storage conditions, hence no complete composition can be reconstructed. Particular fragments depict a lion, a lioness, a lamb; a few pieces retain depictions of gazelles or antelopes, mainly their hind legs and haunches

Liban: une Pompéi byzantine enfouie sous le sable", *Archéologia* 104 (1977), pp. 38–43. The present author's PhD dissertation presented a comprehensive study of the entire assemblage of wall paintings from Porphyreon.

56   For identification of the site with Porphyreon based on historical sources and geographic location see Urszula Wicenciak, *Porphyreon, Hellenistic and Roman Pottery Production in the Sidon Hinterland* (Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean Monograph Series) 7 (Warsaw, 2016), pp. 15–21.

57   Dating established in a recent epigraphic study by Georges Abou Diwan, "À propos de l'usage de l'ère sidonienne à Porphyréôn (Jiyeh et Nabi Younès) à l'époque protobyzantine", *Chronos* 30 (2015), pp. 145–163.

58   Sophie Garreau-Forrest, Ali Khalil Badawi, La cathédrale de Paulin de Tyr décrite par Eusèbe de Césarée: mythe ou réalité? Antiquité Tardive 22 (2014), pp. 111–123

59   Procopius, *On Buildings* 5.9.23.

60   Yoram Tsafrir, Leah Di Segni, Judith Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani. Iudaea-Palestina: Eretz Israel in the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods: Maps and gazetteer* (Jerusalem, 1994), p. 204.

61   Pauline Donceel-Voûte, *Les pavements des églises byzantines de Syrie et du Liban: décor, archéologie et liturgie* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1988), pp. 354–359; Fadi Jounblat, Helga Seeden, Mounir Atallah, *Beiteddine: Past and Present* (Beirut, 1989).

62   Mariusz Gwiazda, "The marble decoration of the presbytery of the Late Antique basilica in Jiyeh (Porphyreon) – Lebanon", *Światowit* 12 (53) (2014), Fascicle A, pp. 127–142.

63   Wall mosaic was located in the semi-dome of the apse as indicated by imprints of tesserae on a patch of mortar adhering to the masonry.

(Figs. 2.1–2.3). A few species of birds are represented: a peacock, partridges, pigeons, a parakeet, a flamingo, another species of a wader, and possibly a pheasant (Figs. 2.4–2.5). The animals are depicted among simple, stylized plants. *Voussoirs* from an arch have their face decorated with acanthus scrolls filled with depictions of fruit, a partridge pecking on grapes (Fig. 2.6). Another, frieze-like depiction of inhabited scrolls shows a rushing hound and a rooster (Fig. 2.7). Only a few fragments, all incomplete, representing human figures were found: a haloed man in *imago clipeata*, three orans, and two pieces possibly representing genre scenes. Non-figural representations include jeweled crosses, vegetal motifs, various geometric patterns, and painted inscriptions (Figs. 2.8–2.9). The paintings are tentatively dated to the late fifth or early sixth century on the basis of archaeological evidence, mosaic inscriptions from the basilica, and style.

The archaeological discoveries and the few literary references to Porphyreon in ancient sources suggest that it was a settlement of little importance.[64] For that reason, it seems unlikely that the artists who executed decorations in the basilica and the houses were based in Porphyreon; it is possible that they came from one of the regional urban centers such as Sidon or Tyre on occasion of the edification of the basilica and the dwellings. Furthermore, recent stratigraphic soundings in the residential district indicated that the last major remodeling (and probably, also redecorating) of the houses took place in the late fifth or early sixth century.[65] However, it seems unlikely that all houses were decorated at the same time and by one team of painters, especially because the particular assemblages of paintings coming from the residential district exhibit noticeable stylistic differences. Even though we cannot prove such hypothesis at this point, we may suppose that the differences in style result from the fact that the execution of paintings in particular houses was entrusted to different workshops which arrived at Porphyreon whenever its inhabitants carried out building or renovation works followed by the decoration of the interiors.

The exceptionality of the wall paintings from Porphyreon also results from the fact that they are currently the only material counterparts to some of the descriptions of wall paintings in ecclesiastic buildings found in Late Antique literary sources. This applies especially to representations of animals, which

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64   Wicenciak, *Porphyreon*, pp. 15–21.

65   Mariusz Gwiazda, Tomasz Waliszewski, "Early Byzantine residential architecture in Jiyeh (Porphyreon) after excavation seasons in 2012 and 2013", *Archeologia* 65 (2014), pp. 35–56.
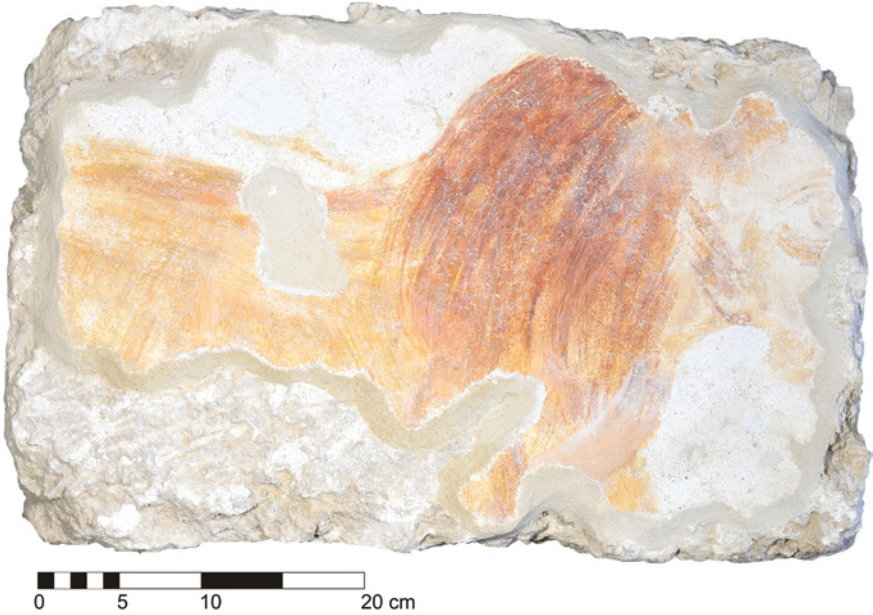
FIGURE 2.1   Representation of a lion from the residential district of Porphyreon
(DGA ACC. NO. JY87WP)

FIGURE 2.2   Representation of a lamb standing among generic plants from the basilica of
Porphyreon. In the upper right corner, tracing of the representation
(DGA ACC. NOS 98513, 98556)

FIGURE 2.3   Representation of an antelope or a gazelle nibbling a plant from the
             residential district of Porphyreon
             (DGA ACC. NO. JY63WP)

FIGURE 2.4   Representation of a peacock among plants which was likely located above an arch
             or semidome of an apse in the basilica of Porphyreon
             (DGA ACC. NO. 98485)

FIGURE 2.5   Representation of a partridge pecking on a plant from the basilica of
                     Porphyreon. The plaster continues on the right-hand side of the
                     ashlar, meaning that the representation was located to the left of
                     some kind of opening in the wall
                     (E.G. A WINDOW, A DOORWAY) (DGA ACC. NO. 98516)

often appear on mosaic pavements,[66] but have not been attested on Early
Christian wall paintings thus far. For example, Nilus of Sinai in a letter to pre-
fect Olympiodoros speaks of depictions of nature and hunting scenes as

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66   Henry Maguire, *Earth and Ocean. The terrestrial world in Early Byzantine art* (University
          Park, 1987).

FIGURE 2.6   Face of one of *voussoirs* from an arch found in the basilica of Porphyreon whose
face was decorated with the inhabited scrolls motif. Here a representation of a
partridge pecking on a bunch of grapes
(DGA ACC. NO. 98519)

inappropriate for the decoration of a church.[67] Given the fact that the epistle
is a literary formula, not a real letter, it is possible that Nilus used it to express
a general critique of such decorative program that he might have seen in some
church or churches. The numerous fragments of representations of animals
found at Porphyreon fit the decorative scheme criticized by Nilus.

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67   St. Nilus of Sinai, *Letter to Prefect Olympiodoros*, trans. Mango, *The art*, pp. 32–33.

FIGURE 2.7 Two fragments of wall paintings with inhabited scrolls motif featuring rushing dog (left) and a small rooster pecking on grapes (right). The representation comes from the basilica and likely constituted a frieze-like decoration
(DGA ACC. NOS 97003, 97115)

FIGURE 2.8 Representation of three ripe pomegranates set amid foliage from the basilica of Porphyreon
(DGA ACC. NO. 97140)

FIGURE 2.9   Fragmentary depiction of a jeweled cross set on decorative base
from the basilica of Porphyreon
(DGA ACC. NOS 97132, 98526, 98543)

Panegyrics of Choricius of Gaza in honor of bishop Marcianus provide further insight into the employment of representations of nature in wall decorations.[68] Unlike Nilus, Choricius not only does not question these subject matters but assumes that they are perfectly suitable for a sacred interior, which may imply that such depictions were indeed commonly employed. He speaks, for example, of depictions of birds in the church of St. Sergius in Gaza, which can be coupled with such representations found on wall paintings from Porphyreon. Interestingly, Choricius emphasizes on the representation of a flock of partridges; these birds appear on several fragments from Porphyreon (Figs. 2.5–2.6). Among wall decorations of the St. Stephen Church in Gaza, he lists a Nilotic landscape; the fragments from Porphyreon depicting wading birds could belong to such landscape.

Similarities between decorations of the basilica in Porphyreon and descriptions of Gazan churches should not surprise. Even though these sites are about 300 km apart, they were in fact, very well connected. Both of them were situated on one of the most important ancient Levantine roads, the *Via Maris*.[69] Such location allowed for convenient circulation of the artists and transmission of artistic ideas between the numerous cities situated along this way. The aforementioned case of the architect from Antioch who was summoned to oversee the construction of the cathedral in Gaza illustrates this phenomenon. It seems plausible that the craftspeople traveled up and down this road and offered their services in towns located along it.

5   Shifts in the Technique of Execution of Wall Paintings and Their Influence on the Organization of Painters' Work

Besides considerations of iconographic features, investigations of the activities of Late Antique painters' workshops could benefit greatly from the examination of technical characteristics of the paintings. Unfortunately, they are rarely subject to technical studies as they usually survive in poor condition. For that reason, it has not yet been established whether the Late Antique painters followed any specific guidelines for the execution of the paintings as their Roman predecessors did. Nevertheless, a couple of technical features exhibited by wall

68   Choricius of Gaza, *Laudatio Martiani* I, 17–76; II, 28–54, trans. Mango, *The art*, pp. 60–72.

69   Albrecht Alt, "Stationen der römischen Hauptstrasse von Ägypten nach Syrien", *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, 70 (2) (1954), pp. 154–166. Also see: Marlena Whiting, *Travel in the Late Antique Levant,* DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford.

paintings from a number of sites[70] may shed some light on the organization of the workshops.

Firstly, while Roman period wall paintings were executed on no less than two layers of preparatory mortar and a layer of plaster, Late Antique wall paintings, at least in the Levant, are either executed on plaster laid directly on masonry or preceded by just one layer of preparatory mortar. This reduction of the number of substrate layers certainly affected the condition and chances for survival of these wall paintings and may testify to a lower financial input of the donors and/or decline in the know-how of the artisans.

Furthermore, in case of the presence of a layer of preparatory mortar one may often notice chevron-shaped or diagonal incisions made in the surface of the rendering when it was still fresh.[71] The incisions were supposed to increase the adhesion of the next rendering and had to be made if it was anticipated that the first coating would dry before the subsequent layer of mortar was applied. Otherwise, application of another coat to a fresh rendering would suffice to ensure proper adhesion between the layers. Consequently, incisions made in the fresh layer of preparatory mortar indicate that the workmen did not plan, or at least, were not compelled to apply the plaster right after the application of the mortar. This points to an important difference between the organization of painters' workshops in the Roman and the Late Antique period. While substrate layers for Roman wall paintings were generally applied to the walls shortly one after another and by the same workshop that executed

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70   Porphyreon, discussed here;
        Grotto of Annunciation in Nazareth: Ada Capasso Carola, "Esami di frammenti di intonaci provenineti dalla grotta della Annunzazione di Nazareth", *Liber Annuus* 19 (1969), pp. 168–191.
        Rehovot-in-the-Negev: Tsafrir, "The Northern Church", pp. 64–67.
        Caesarea: Ravit Linn, *Scientific Investigation of Roman and Early Byzantine Wall Paintings in Caesarea*, MA Thesis in Painting Conservation, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London (1998).
        Umm el-Jimal: Edith Dunn, George Rapp, "Characterization of Mortars and Pozzolanic Materials from Umm el-Jimal", *Studies in Conservation* 49 (2004), pp. 145–160.
        Horvat Karkur Illit: Pau Figueras, "Building materials", in *Horvat Karkur 'Illit: a Byzantine Cemetery Church in the Northern Negev* (*Final report of the Excavations 1989–1995*), ed. Pau Figueras (Beer-Sheva, 2004), pp. 69–77.
        Jabal Harun: Christina Danelli, "The Analysis of Wall Plaster at Jabal Hārūn", in *Petra, the mountain of Aaron: the Finnish archaeological project in Jordan, Vol. 1. The Church and the Chapel* eds Jaakko Frösén, Zbigniew T. Fiema (Helsinki, 2008), pp. 405–419.
        Hippos-Sussita: Julia Burdajewicz, "Wall Painting Decoration", pp. 161–180.
71   E.g. at the Sanctuary of Lot at Deir 'Ain Abata (present author's observation), in Jabal Harun: Danelli, "The Analysis", p. 413, col. fig. 65; in the church in Rehovot-in-the-Negev: Tsafrir "The North Church", pp. 29, 67, fig. 98.

the decorations (as showed on the aforementioned stele from the Museum of Sens), apparently Late Antique artisans did not necessarily carry out the works during one "campaign". It is even possible that the preparatory mortar was applied to the walls by the masons to level out the irregularities of the masonry, while the painters executed only the final coat of plaster and the painting. We may see an example of such a procedure in the case of wall paintings from Porphyreon where all irregularities of the face of the masonry were leveled with the same kind of mortar which was used for the wall construction, which suggests that it was masons' task. In addition, the plaster layer exhibits a different mineral composition, which again, suggests execution by a different team.[72] It is possible that when the masons completed the building and rendered the masonry with a leveling layer of mortar, the painters arrived, plastered the walls, and executed the decorations. In comparison to Roman workshops that were responsible for preparation of all substrate layers and the paint layer, and hence, had to spend considerable time working on the site, such a process is significantly simpler and more time-efficient.

Furthermore, we cannot rule out that even the painting process could be carried out independently from the plastering. As it was stated above, the principal painting technique of the Romans was *al fresco*, which requires smooth coordination of the work of a painter with that of a plasterer. A few studies have shown that the painting technique applied in Late Antiquity was often *secco* or lime painting, techniques which are simpler, and generally considered technically less refined than that of the *fresco*.[73] In these techniques, the

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72 Both the mortar and the plaster were executed with the use of the same mineral, locally available materials, but they differ in terms of participation of particular aggregates which were used as fillers. The different participation is explained by the fact that the aggregates for the mortar were sifted before the application (the grain size fits within 0.2–0.4 mm range) whereas the aggregates for the plaster were not (the grains measure from 0.25–1.5 mm). As a result, the mortar is compact and homogenous, thus, of good quality, whereas the plaster is very crumbly and incoherent. This difference in the manner of preparation of the materials and in consequence, the quality of the renderings, suggests that they were executed by different teams of craftspeople. The composition of the mortar is as follows: calcium carbonate binder (no less than 60 per cent of the volume), quartz (10–25 per cent), crushed limestone (2–10 per cent), iron compounds (2–5 per cent), and fossils of marine organisms (1–2 per cent). The plaster contains calcium carbonate binder (no less than 70 per cent), fossils of marine organisms (10–20 per cent), crushed limestone (2–7 per cent), quartz (1–5 per cent), and iron compounds (1–2 per cent).

73 E.g. Hippos-Sussita: Burdajewicz "Wall painting decoration", pp. 175–176; Jabal Harun: Danelli "The Analysis", p. 415; Qusayr Amra: Sara Bianchin, Umberto Casellato, Monica Favaro, Pietro Alessandro Vigato, "Painting technique and state of conservation of wall paintings at Qusayr Amra, Amman, Jordan", *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 8 No. (3) (2007), pp. 289–293; the paintings were possibly executed in *fresco* and finished in egg tempera.

pigments are mixed either with an organic binder or with lime water[74] and applied to a dry plaster. Therefore, plastering can be done much prior to the execution of the painting and even by a completely different team. As a result, the organization of the painting process could be much more straightforward than before, and likely it was more economical in terms of the number of people involved, and the time invested to complete the work. We may imagine that less time spent at the site and fewer people necessary to carry out the works could increase the mobility of the painters.

6   Employment of Pattern Books?

Repetition of compositional trends, iconographic schemes and the popularity of certain motifs on ancient or Roman mosaic floors or wall paintings led some scholars[75] to suppose that artists could have used pattern books.[76] While such supposition seems plausible, no unequivocal material example of such books has survived to this day.

Intriguing, and much-discussed in context of its meaning and authenticity is the Artemidorus Papyrus.[77] The papyrus roll, dated to the first or early second century AD on the basis of C[14] method, was reconstructed from over 50

Wall paintings executed in *secco* or lime painting tend to become dull, faint and powdery during the course of time. Such condition often allows one to rule out *fresco* technique.

74   Saturated water solution of calcium hydroxide (slaked lime).

75   The use of pattern books is assumed or suspected in wall painting: Ling, *Roman painting*, pp. 217–218; Clarke, "Model-book, outline-book", pp. 203–214; in floor mosaics: Hachlili, *Ancient mosaic pavements*, pp. 273–275; Katherine Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge, Eng., 2012), p. 302; Birte Poulsen, "Identifying mosaic workshops in Late Antiquity: epigraphic evidence and a case study", in *Ateliers and Artisans in Roman Art and Archaeology* (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 92), eds Troels Myrup Kristensen and Birte Poulsen (Portsmouth, R.I., 2012), p. 133; in architectural decorations: Asher Ovadiah, Yehudit Turnheim, *"Peopled" scrolls in Roman architectural decoration in Israel. The Roman theater at Beth Shean/Scythopolis* (*Rivista di Archaeologia Supplementi* 12) (Rome, 1994), p. 111; in textiles: Annemarie Stauffer, "Cartoons for weavers from Graeco-Roman Egypt"*, Archaeological Research in Roman Egypt*, (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement 19), ed. D.M. Bailey, (Portsmouth, R.I., 1996), pp. 223–230; and in codices: Thomas B. Stevenson, *Miniature decoration in the Vatican Virgil: a study in Late Antique iconography* (Tübingen, 1983), pp. 109–112.

76   Naturally, the existence of pattern books does not exclude the process of recreating images from artists' memory or imagination. Furthermore, small-scale models could not reproduce all the details which were to be included in monumental decorations, meaning that certain input of creativity and artistic memory was indispensable.

77   Giambattista D'Alessio, "On the «Artemidorus» Papyrus", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 171 (2009), pp. 27–43.

fragments extracted from a lump of recycled papyrus possibly used to stuff an animal mummy. Its verso displays over 40 images of imaginary and exotic animals identified by labels. The recto retains a map, five columns of Greek text on geography which partially corresponds with the writings of Artemidorus of Ephesus, and 23 sketches of human heads, hands, and feet. It is not clear whether the two sets of figural drawings were related to the text.[78] The manner in which the representations of animals are captured and rendered suggests that the papyrus might have been reused at some point of its history as a sketch and/or pattern book in a mosaicists' or painters' workshop. The set of sketches of human heads, hands, and feet may have served as models for a sculptor. While the use of this papyrus as a pattern sheet is debatable, it could be an evidence of the process of copying other works of art, an important component of the artistic training. By copying, the artists were multiplying already existing iconographic models, and recording them both in material form, and in their memories.

Other, fragmentarily preserved, possible candidates for pattern sheets include a scrap of papyrus from the imperial period which represents Eros and Psyche[79] and several papyri which could have served as models for weavers, as they replicate motifs which frequently occur on Coptic textiles of the Late Antique period.[80]

One mention of a set of small-scale patterns which were used by the painters as models is to be found in a seventh-century text *Vita S. Pancratii*.[81] According to this legendary account, St. Peter, who was building a church at Pontus, instructed a painter named Joseph to prepare his, Pancratius', and Jesus' portraits, and a set of images depicting the entire "picture-story" of the life of Christ. The pictures were made on parchment and in encaustic technique on panels and served as models to decorate the church. Later on, St. Peter sent Pancratius and another preacher to evangelize the West. He equipped them, among other items, with "two volumes of the divine picture-stories containing

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78   D'Alessio, "On the «Artemidorus» Papyrus", pp. 29, 42; Jaś Elsner, "P. Artemid.: The Images", in *Images and Texts on the "Artemidorus Papyrus." Working papers on P. Artemid.* (*St. John's College Oxford, 2008)*, eds Kai Brodersen and Jaś Elsner (Stuttgard, 2009), pp. 43–46.

79   Michael Donderer, "Antike Musterbücher und (k)ein Ende. Ein neuer Papyrus und die Aussage der Mosaiken", *Musiva et Sectilia* 2–3 (2005–2006), p. 83.

80   I would like to thank prof. Judith McKenzie for drawing my attention to pattern books for weavers. For textile production see Ewa Wipszycka, *L'Industrie textile dans l'Égypte romaine* (Wroclaw, 1965); Stauffer, "Cartoons for weavers". Examples of such papyri are in the collections of the Victoria and Albert's Museum (4th–6th c. AD; inv. no. T.15-1946) or Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung of the Staatliche Museum in Berlin (4th–6th c. AD; inv. no. P 9926).

81   *Life of St Pancratios*, trans. Mango, *The Art*, pp. 137–138.

the decoration of the church" to be used as models in the churches the two men would build in the West.[82]

7 The Contribution of Travelling Painters and Pattern Books to the Transmission and Development of Iconography

The story cited above illustrates how such pattern books, if indeed they existed, could contribute to the transmission of iconographic schemes in monumental art. Unlike the case of minor arts (e.g., textiles) which were produced in stationary workshops and then delivered to the client, displayed in a shop or exported, wall decorations could be executed and seen only *in situ*. This meant that the craftsmen and artists had to travel with their workshop to the place of the commission, including the necessary materials, as well as their pattern books. The only exception from such procedure could be made in case of *emblemata* which would be created in a stationary workshop, transported to the site and inserted into a previously executed wall painting or embedded within the mosaic carpet.[83] However, while tessellated or painted *emblemata* were a frequent occurrence in the decoration of wealthy Roman houses, there is no evidence of this technique being employed in the Late Antique period. Additionally, Early Christian wall decorations, featuring depictions of monumental representative images in apses (e.g., enthroned Christ, Transfiguration) or large narrative cycles presenting the histories of saints, probably did not provide many opportunities to employ *emblemata*.[84]

The role of such pattern books in transmitting, establishing, and reinforcing Early Christian iconography and visual culture could have been significant. In the late fourth century an opponent of creating images of holy persons, Epiphanius of Salamis, argued that artists should not paint depictions of Christ, prophets, and apostles because by doing it accordingly to their own fancy they

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82   In this case the pictures were likely made on parchment, since the author speaks of "opening" or "unfolding" them. In another passage he uses expression *pinakes chartôoi*, pictures on parchment. See Mango, *The Art*, note 78 on p. 138.

83   Ling, *Roman Painting*, pp. 18–21. On execution of *emblemata* in ancient wall paintings see Barbet, Allag, *Techniques de préparation*, pp. 980–983. For *emblemata* inserted in mosaic pavements see Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, pp. 288–289.

84   For example, complex narrative cycles depicted in the church of St. Sergius in Gaza are described by Choricius. A cycle of votive representations decorated the nave of the St. Demetrios church at Thessaloniki. Robin S. Cormack, "The Mosaic Decoration of S. Demetrios, Thessaloniki: A Re-Examination in the Light of the Drawings of W.S. George", *The Annual of the British School at Athens,* 64 (1969), pp. 17–52.

create very different images, which are false and misleading the faithful.[85] Early Christian wall paintings from the Catacombs may serve as an illustration of his concern. Stylistic analyses of these decorations demonstrate that the most skillfully and consistently rendered motifs are those related to nature: flowers, birds, still lives. The artists were well-acquainted with these subjects because they were long present in the Hellenistic-Roman visual culture. Meanwhile, there were no established iconographic models for the representations of the Old and New Testament scenes and persons, hence the artists had to rely on their imagination. The images they created often reveal certain hesitation and uncertainty in the rendering of the figures caused by the lack of a reference model.[86]

This lack of consistency and iconographic models seems to be gone within a century of Epiphanius' complaints. A number of objects of material culture created in the sixth century, such as illuminations in the Rabbula Gospels (AD 586),[87] icons from the Monastery of the Burning Bush in Sinai,[88] Transfiguration wall mosaic (AD 565/566)[89] in the church of the same monastery, or wall paintings from Caesarea (6th or early 7th c. AD)[90] exhibit a rather coherent and well established iconography: figural depictions found in these artworks show a progressing tendency towards frontal, hieratic rendering of the figures, articulation of individual facial features which begin to be used to identify the person (e.g., different shapes of beards become characteristic for particular apostles, prophets, and saints), the obligatory use of nimbi, or the reduction of elements of the landscape in favor of abstract backgrounds. Although it cannot be proved at this point, circulation of model books might have facilitated transmission of iconographic schemes and contributed to their coherency.

85   Epiphanius of Salamis, *Testament* and *Letter to the Emperor Theodosius*, trans. Mango, *The art*, pp. 41–42.

86   Paul Corby Finney, *The Invisible God. The earliest Christians on Art* (New York, 1994), pp. 192, 222–228.

87   Kurt Weitzmann, *Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination* (New York, 1977), pp. 97–106; Massimo Bernabò with contributions by Franca Arduini, Pier Georgio Borbone, Andrea Fedeli, Stefano Garosi, Giancarlo Lanterna, Alessandro Mengozzi, Marlia Mundell Mango, Marcello Picollo, Bruno Radicati, Ida G. Rao, *Il Tetravangelo di Rabbula: Firenze, Biblioteca medicea laurenziana, Plut. 1.56: L'illustrazione del Nuovo Testamento nella Siria del VI secolo* (Roma, 2008).

88   Thomas F. Mathews, "Early Icons of the Holy Monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai", in *Holy image, hallowed ground: icons from Sinai*, eds Robert S. Nelson, Kristen M. Collins, (Los Angeles, 2006), pp. 39–56.

89   James, *Mosaics in the Medieval World,* pp. 223–225.

90   Avner, "Early Byzantine", pp. 108–128.

Again, in the light of deficiency of well-preserved wall paintings from the Late Antique period, we are unable to determine the extent of the use of the presumed pattern books or track their circulation. However, among wall paintings from Porphyreon, we find an interesting pair of representations which may point to the use of pattern books by the painters. The first representation was identified as a lamb on the basis of parallels with floor mosaics (Fig. 2.2); the second is a peacock perched above an archway (Fig. 2.4). Both pieces come from the basilica, thus they are likely contemporary and executed by one team of artists. However, the difference between the relative naturalism of the bird and the schematization and stiffness of the lamb is evident. Even though expertise of different authors would be the simplest explanation of this divergence, we may also entertain a possibility that one representation was made relying on artistic memory of the creator, whereas the other was copied from a pattern book. The former one would be that of the lamb since the artist could see livestock on a daily basis and recreated it from memory. However, to represent a peacock, an animal certainly rarely encountered by ordinary people, an artist might have needed to resort to a small-scale exemplary model. Paradoxically, careful copying of that model resulted in a more truthful and successful representation than an image of a common animal created from memory. Furthermore, we should note here that a peacock perching on an arch (and faced by a symmetrical peacock) is a reoccurring motif in Late Antique monumental and minor arts.[91] Its popularity may be due to the use and circulation of pattern books.

8   Conclusions

Taking into consideration the limited archaeological evidence and literary records on Late Antique painters in the Levant it is impossible to propose a picture of the functioning of their workshops that could compare to our knowledge on the manner of work of the Roman period artists. Even though the wall paintings from Porphyreon introduce a new, significant portion of the evidence, any comparative study is hampered by the scarceness and fragmentary

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91   It appears, for example, on a 6th c. wall paintings from a tomb at Antinoe: Mahmoud Zibawi, *Images de l'Égypte chrétienne: iconologie copte* (Paris, Milan, 2003), pp. 21–22, fig. 9; in illuminations of Rabbula Gospels (AD 586) on folio 1r: Bernabò, *Il Tetravangelo*, pp. 84–85, pl. 2; on 6th c. silver book covers: Margaret E. Frazer, "Early Byzantine silver book covers" in *Ecclesiastical silver plate in sixth-century Byzantium,* eds Susan A. Boyd and Marlia Mundell Mango (Washington, D.C., 1992), pp. 57–84.

state of other surviving examples of paintings from the area and period in question. For that reason, the observations proposed in this paper should be considered as a preliminary framework for future research on this subject.

Nevertheless, the new evidence from Porphyreon (both iconographic and technical) coupled with our knowledge on sacred and secular foundations which sprouted throughout the Late Antique Levant and records on the movement of different craftspeople found in written sources, may contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon of transmission and circulation of people and ideas in the Late Antique Levant.

The circulation of craftspeople was likely stimulated by the intensified construction and decoration of the holy Christian sites and later, of Umayyad mosques and palaces, by the imperial, clerical, and private benefactors. Given the number and geographic span of these foundations, we may imagine that it was not uncommon for painters, along with architects and mosaicists, to travel to execute the projects. The convenient locations of some of these sites on pilgrimage and trade routes, such as in the case of Porphyreon, facilitated this movement.

Furthermore, both the movement of the painters and the use of pattern books could have been an important factor in the process of circulation and transmission of iconographic schemes. In case of monumental art which, being tied to an architectural context, could not directly contribute to the dissemination of artistic concepts, it seems likely that models, either reproduced in pattern books or memorized by the artists, played a crucial role in transmitting artistic ideas, maintaining cultural memory, and reinforcing new iconographic models.

Finally, shifts in the technique of execution of wall paintings which appear to have occurred after the Roman period most likely facilitated the process of making of the murals and, in consequence, allowed for greater mobility of the traveling painters. The first notable change concerns the preparation of the substrate layers of the painting. Unlike in the Roman period, when a workshop executed all components of a painting's substrate, Late Antique painters may have been responsible only for application of the final layer of plaster, while preparatory mortar, if present, was prepared by masons. We have seen an example of such a procedure in the case of Porphyreon. The other important change, also attested in Porphyreon, seems to have been the shifting from *fresco* to painting techniques which did not require fresh plaster and thus allowed for execution of the painting independently from the plastering.

The one thing which does not seem to have changed between the Roman times and Late Antiquity is that wall painting remained a valued discipline of

art, as illustrated by two imperial edicts. Edict of Constantine to the Praetorian Prefect Maximus (AD 337)[92] exempted painters along with architects, doctors, sculptors, and a number of other professions from mandatory public service so that they could perfect their art and train apprentices. A few decades later teachers of painting received a special exemption from taxes by the edict of Valentinian and his co-emperors (AD 374). The edict also guaranteed that painters would be provided with free studios or workshops in public places and that they will be free to settle in whatever municipality they wished.[93]

All photographs Directorate General of Antiquities of Lebanon (DGA) and Julia Burdajewicz.

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92   Edict of Constantine to Praetorian Prefect Maximus, trans. Mango, *The art*, p. 15.
93   Ling, *Roman painting*, p. 213.

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A New Pilgrimage Site at Late Antique Ephesus

Transfer of Religious Ideas in Western Asia Minor

Katinka Sewing

Although there are already numerous and widespread studies on the ancient city of Ephesus, even on its late antique period, one can still find some neglected beauties among its ruins.[1] One quite well-preserved building complex, close to the Aegean coastline, has thus far attracted only superficial scholarly attention. However, extensive investigations have recently been resumed.[2] This article introduces this newly investigated church complex and gives an overview on the first results of this ongoing project. More specifically, the paper presents the structure of the building's remains as well as its preliminary reconstruction. Furthermore, this article discusses the interpretation of the building as an important pilgrimage church and compares it to other late antique pilgrimage sites in Asia Minor as an example for the transfer of methods and procedures within this region. It also deals with the larger context of the pilgrimage church in relation to Ephesus and its status within the city. The contextualization reveals a strategy to create a non-static landscape of sacred sites within Ephesus.

For some years now, the focus of the Ephesus excavation has expanded to its surrounding region, especially around the harbours and the harbour canal.[3] At the mouth of the canal, to its southern side, the church building under consideration occupies a small hill, overlooking the Aegean coastline (Fig. 3.1).

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1 See most recently Falko Daim and Sabine Ladstätter, *Ephesos in byzantinischer Zeit* (Mainz, 2011).

2 So far two campaigns were carried out in 2015 and 2016 to document the remaining wall structures and architectural components.

3 See for example Recep Meriç, "Das Hinterland von Ephesos: archäologisch-topographische Forschungen im Kaystros-Tal," *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes in Wien*, Ergänzungsheft 12 (2009); Martin Steskal, "Wandering Cemeteries. Roman and Late Roman Burials in the Capital of the Province of Asia," ed. Olivier Henry, *Le morts dans la ville. Pratiques, contexts et impacts des inhumations intra-muros en Anatolie, du début de l'Âge du Bronze à l'époque romaine ; 2èmes rencontres d'archéologie de l'IFÉA, Istanbul, 14 15 Novembre, 2011* (Istanbul, 2013), pp. 243–257; Friederike Stock, Anna Pint, Barbara Horejs, Sabine Ladstätter and Helmut Brückner, "In search of the harbours – New evidence of Late Roman and Byzantine harbours of Ephesus," *Quaternary International* 312 (2013), pp. 57–69; Martin Steskal, "Ephesos and its Harbors. A City in Search of its Place," *Byzas* 19 (2014), pp. 325–338; See also the *Jahresberichte* of the Austrian Archaeological Institute 2008–15.

FIGURE 3.1   Christian pilgrimage sites in Ephesus
(COURTESY OF CHRISTIAN KURTZE AND THE AUSTRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
INSTITUTE)

Although only 8 m in height, the hill must have been a landmark within the flat surrounding area (Fig. 3.2) – especially, since the Late Antique coastline, unlike today, ran directly along the hill. The results of a geological survey from 2014 show the development of this area: the site was a small island before it became part of the mainland during Late Antiquity. Over the centuries, the coastline silted up and, therefore, moved slowly away from the hill.[4]

The modern name of this area is Pamucak. But for the small hill, no ancient or modern field name is recorded.[5] One reason might be that the hill together

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4   See Friederike Stock, Stefan Halder, Stephan Opitz, Anna Pint, Sirri Seren, Sabine Ladstätter and Helmut Brückner, *Holocene Coastline Changes and Landscape Reconstruction in the Western Küçük Menderes Graben*, Turkey (forthcoming).

5   The name Kumtepe, previously used to identify the site, is not correct. This is a different hill on the opposite side of the canal; see Öcal Özeren, "Zollgebäude in Pamucak," ed. Peter Scherrer, *Ephesos. Der neue Führer. 100 Jahre österreichische Ausgrabungen 1895–1995* (Vienna, 1995), p. 233; Sabine Ladstätter, "Forschungen auf dem Kumtepe," ed. Gesellschaft der Freunde von Ephesos, *Forschungen in Ephesos, Information über den Stand der Forschungen* 1/14 (Vienna, 2014), pp. 3–4; Sabine Ladstätter, "Kumtepe," in *Wissenschaftlicher Jahresbericht des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts* (Vienna, 2013), p. 19.

FIGURE 3.2   The hill in Pamucak with the remaining ruins
(COURTESY OF KATINKA SEWING)

with the remains of the building seems quite unremarkable at first glance. The very detailed topographical map by Anton Schindler from 1897 shows a small, unnamed hill south of the harbour canal without any ancient structures.[6] Apparently, the ruins of the building complex were still completely covered with soil when the Efes Müzesi (Selçuk) carried out excavations during the 1980s.[7] On that occasion, larger parts of the building were excavated, conservation and restoration activities took place.[8] Various finds were recovered and taken

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6   *Forschungen in Ephesos* I (Vienna, 1906), enclosed map; see also the map by Marie-Gabriel-Florent-Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier from 1782, ibid. fig. 7. For a description of the landscape see Wilhelm Brockhoff, *Studien zur Geschichte der Stadt Ephesos vom 4. nachchristlichen Jahrhundert bis zu ihrem Untergang in der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Jena, 1905); Otto Benndorf, "Zur Ortskunde und Stadtgeschichte," in *Forschungen in Ephesos* I (Vienna, 1906), pp. 9–22; Lois Hopfgartner, "Die Entdeckung des spätbyzantinischen und genuesischen Ephesos," *Studi Genuesi* 4 (1962/63) 17–81. fig. 5. The local museum at Selçuk refers to the building as "Üç Anıt", which means "Three Monuments", although the actual meaning remains unclear.

7   Up to this point, the actual commencement of the excavation remains unknown.

8   Unfortunately, there is no documentation of these activities in the museum archive. Apparently, the conservation and restauration phase was primarily concerned with the consolidation of walls and the reconstruction of some brick arches in the lower gallery. Things might

to the local museum.[9] So far, no report on this work has been published. But the Hellenistic and Roman inscriptions, which were found on reused spolia, are mentioned in the regular publications on the Ephesian inscriptions.[10] In these publications, the excavated building is merely labelled as "villa". Later, the designation as a customs house prevailed. The main argument for this interpretation was probably the location of the building at the mouth of the canal.[11]

At least since 2013, after the Austrian Archaeological Institute (ÖAI) started the examination of the site, the interpretation of the main building as a church gained currency.[12] But a detailed examination of the structures remained a desideratum. The current studies are based on archaeological methods as well as on historical building research (*Bauforschung*): in 2015 and 2016, two documentation campaigns were conducted to carry out graphic, descriptive, and photographic documentation work. The basis of the drawings are 3D laser scans.[13] In combining scans and hand drawings, it is possible to create a precise image of the layout of the building. Numerous architectural elements such as column shafts, bases and capitals were all drawn by hand as well.[14] These

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become clearer once I examine the rich archive of Hansgerd Hellenkemper, who collected pictures, drawings, and notes from the early 1990s from the site. I would like to thank Dr. Hellenkemper sincerely for sharing these valuable documents with me.

9   A marble reliquary (inv. 1/1/87) is in the permanent exhibition, a removed mosaic floor is in the open-air depot; see also below (with fn. 25). There are no records about other finds so far.

10   Dieter Knibbe, Helmut Engelmann and Bülent İplikçioğlu, "Neue Inschriften aus Ephesos XI," *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Institutes in Wien* 59, Beiblatt (1989), 197, Inv. 4578; 201, Inv. 4577; 211, Inv. 4579; 225, Inv. 4576; Mustafa Büyükkolancı and Helmut Engelmann, "Inschriften aus Ephesos," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 86 (1991), p. 138; Helmut Engelmann, "Zum Kaiserkult in Ephesos," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 97 (1993), p. 285.

11   Özeren, *Zollgebäude Pamucak*, p. 233; Furthermore, Özeren sees a later phase during which the building was turned into a cloister. Another factor for the interpretation as a customs house might have been the discovery of a large inscription concerning a Greek tariff legislation; see Helmut Engelmann and Dieter Knibbe, "Das Zollgesetz der Provinz Asia. Eine neue Inschrift aus Ephesos," *Epigraphica Anatolica* 14 (1989).

12   Ladstätter, *Kumtepe*, p. 19.

13   Already in 2013, Christian Kurtze, on behalf of the Austrian Archaeological Institute (ÖAI), produced the 3D-Laserscan of the structures. I also owe him my thanks for his work and for his technical advice.

14   The architectural elements were drawn by Franz Fichtinger, Katharina Sahm, Sophie Schlosser and Volkan Topal. I owe them many thanks for their dedicated work as well as for their company in the quite lonesome fields of Pamucak.

elements form a catalogue of about 260 pieces.[15] Based on these records, it has been possible to draw accurate reconstructions of the church complex, including its building phases as well as detailed elevations of the walls.

1   Structure and Reconstruction of the Building Complex

Most of the conclusions presented here are based on a careful examination of the building itself. It is, therefore, important to have a closer look at the archaeological and architectural features. The whole site covers an area of about 3500 m^2 (Fig. 3.3). While the general structure of the complex is rather unique, the layout of the main building – the church – is comparatively simple. It can be identified as a three-aisled, basilica-type church. Three entrances from the west – one to every aisle – and one each from south and north, lead into the church. Its foundations, as well as many elements of its architectural decoration are well preserved. Unfortunately, parts of the floor as well as the apse are destroyed. Their walls collapsed into the large crypt below the church (Fig. 3.4). The extant walls consist of rubble and two-rowed layers of brick with mortar. The church has a compact shape of 25 x 18 m. The nave is relatively wide (10 m in width) and was once separated from the narrow side aisles (2.80 to 3.00 m) by eight columns. The intercolumniation is about 2 m. An additional separation is made by a stylobate in the form of simple spolia blocks underneath the columns in combination with low walls between them. Based on the preserved architectural elements, it is possible to reconstruct the position and height of the columns for the lower as well as for an upper story of the nave.[16] It is a simple structure with "fluted capitals" (*Pfeifenkelchkapitell*) for both stories (Fig. 3.5). There are two L-shaped walls in the center of the nave whose purpose remains, as of now, unknown. But it seems that they were constructed at the same time as the main structure (Fig. 3.4). A staircase of 0.90 m width and 1.90 m height leading down to a crypt below features prominently in the eastern part of the southern aisle. Low benches run along the outside walls of the side aisles.

In addition to the graphic documentation of the complex, the floor of the church was also cleaned. The remains of a mosaic as well as a later *opus sectile* floor were uncovered (Fig. 3.6).[17] Already in 1987, the largest part of

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15   Not every piece was drawn. But all are documented in descriptions with exact measurements and photographs.

16   This would not have been possible without Franz Fichtinger`s accurate observation and patience.

17   Old pictures of the site showed parts of the mosaic floor in situ. Ingeborg and Klaus-Peter Simon took these pictures during their holidays 1987 in Pamucak. These are a helpful
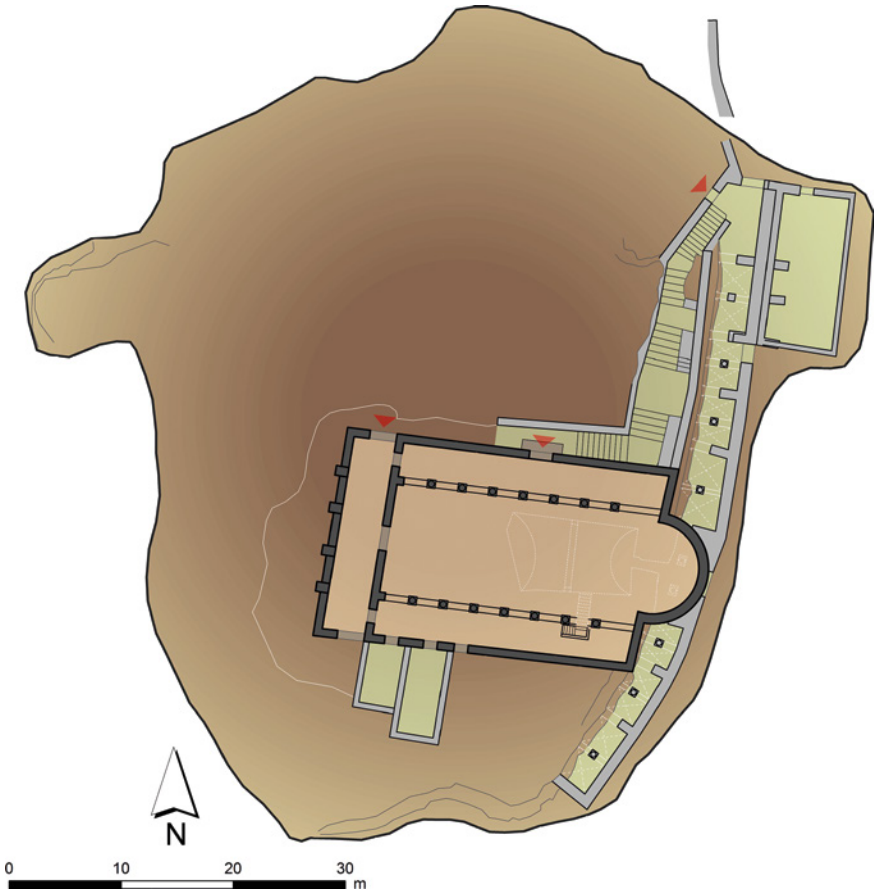
FIGURE 3.3   Schematic ground plan of the Pamucak pilgrimage site
(COURTESY OF CHRISTIAN KURTZE AND THE AUSTRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
INSTITUTE)

the mosaic of the nave was brought into the open-air depot of the muse-
um.[18] The mosaic of the nave shows a pattern of interlacing circles, consisting
of three different ropes, arranged in parallel lines.[19] One of the ropes is executed

source to reconstruct the archaeological works and the restorations at that time and
I want to thank them both warmly for providing me with the pictures.

18   A short report on these activities can be found in the local museum.

19   The pattern of interlacing circles or loops is a new and typical element of the late antique
style. See Veronika Scheibelreiter, *Die Mosaiken Westkleinasiens. Tessellate des 2. Jhs. v. Chr.
bis Anfang des 7. Jhs. n. Chr.* (Vienna, 2011), pp. 176–179.

FIGURE 3.4   View to the west into the nave. Foreground: the crypt below the church
(COURTESY OF KATINKA SEWING)

FIGURE 3.5   Fluted capital, Pfeifenkelchkapitell
(COURTESY OF KATINKA SEWING)

FIGURE 3.6   Mosaic of the south aisle and marble floor of the nave
(COURTESY OF KATINKA SEWING)

in rainbow-style technique.[20] Within the loops are various geometric patterns, like small knot- and rosette-patterns. The main pattern shows a wave-band, a crowstep, and an ivy-scroll frame.[21] The mosaic can be tentatively dated to the early 5th century on stylistic grounds.[22] Since the mosaic clearly belongs to the first building phase of the complex, the construction of the building itself can also be assigned to this period.

20   For an analysis of the rainbow-style see Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 176–177. Compare also the church at the Magnesian Gate, Ephesus (end of 4th/beginning of 5th century) with a mosaic floor in a rich rainbow-style; Renate Pillinger, "Die christlichen Denkmäler von Ephesos. Eine Bestandsaufnahme als Rück- und Vorschau," *Mitteilungen zur Christlichen Archäologie* 2 (1996), pp. 39–70, esp. p. 41; Scheibelreiter, *Mosaiken*, pp. 215–217, cat. 19, fig. 95.

21   The ivy-scroll is an important pattern of late antique mosaics. See Scheibelreiter, *Mosaiken*, p. 180.

22   In comparison e. g. with the mosaic floors of the Alytarchenstoa, Ephesus (ca. 400 A.D.) and the narthex of the Church of Mary, Ephesus (before 431 A.D.); Scheibelreiter, *Mosaiken*, pp. 212–214, cat. 17, fig. 66–91 and pp. 250–252, cat. 37, fig. 189–190.

The remains of the mosaic of the south aisle are different in style and technique. The tesserae are more loosely set than those in the nave. The junction to the mosaic of the nave is irregular and loose. The mosaic shows a stylized wavy scroll pattern with image fields. Just one and a half of these fields are preserved. One shows a rose and is aligned with the south entrance. The other field shows the tail of a dolphin and is aligned with the nave. This mosaic was a later addition, possibly during the late 5th or early 6th century, and probably replaced an earlier brick floor.[23] In contrast, it seems that the northern aisle never received a mosaic floor. Here, some bricks or only their imprints in the screed are partly preserved.

A marble floor on top of the mosaic of the nave – but not in the aisles – marks a later decoration-phase of the church. However, it is not possible to determine if this change occurred at the same time as the execution of the new mosaic decoration of the south aisle. It is also conceivable that both decoration phases happened independently of one another. The *opus sectile* pavement consists of different types of marble, which were probably reused. It mainly shows different patterns of interlaced circles and rhombi separated by larger, rectangular panels (Fig. 3.6). This pattern can be roughly dated to the second half of the 5th century.[24] Some parts of the *opus sectile* were carefully repaired in a later phase.

The narthex is located to the west of the church. The entrances may have been located at the narrow sides in the north and south, but only little of the walls has survived here. The floor of the narthex was paved with large bricks. To the south of the church, at its western end, two small rooms were later added. Their entrances led into the church. The purpose of the rooms might have been either small side chapels, mausolea, or might have been related to the liturgy.

Underneath the nave is a crypt, remarkable in its size of 11 × 6 × 4 m (Fig. 3.7). It is carved completely into the rock. Brick walls face the rock and a barrel vault can be reconstructed here. The walls were plastered, but just little of its former decoration has remained: red lines on a white ground mark the first phase of decoration. Of two further phases, only scattered layers of plaster have been

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23   The usage of image fields in geometric patterns seems to appear later than the geometric patterns themselves; see Scheibelreiter, *Mosaiken*, p. 178.

24   See Urs Peschlow, "Zum byzantinischen opus sectile-Boden," in *Festschrift Kurt Bittel*, eds. Harald Hauptmann and Rainer Michael Boehmer (Mainz, 1983), pp. 435–447, esp. pp. 435–436. Compare with the opus sectile floor at the Agora Church in Elaiussa Sebaste (mid-5th century); Chiara Morselli, "La distruzione dell'agora e l'impianto della basilica protobizantina," in *Elaiussa Sebaste III. L'agora romana*, ed. Eugenia Equini Schneider (Istanbul, 2010), pp. 54–89, esp. pp. 76–81.

FIGURE 3.7   View inside the crypt to the west
            (COURTESY OF KATINKA SEWING)

preserved. Also, a marble reliquary, on display in the local museum today, was found in the pilgrimage church.[25] It is a small case in the shape of a typical

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25   Permanent exhibition of Efes Müzesi (inv. 1/1/87); Selahattin Erdemgil, *Katalog des Ephesos Museums* (Istanbul, 1989), p. 71; Pillinger, "Christliche Denkmäler", p. 52; Ayşe Aydın,

sarcophagus from Asia Minor and may have contained the venerated relics of the sanctuary.[26] It might have been stored in the crypt or – even more likely – in the church either inside or underneath an altar.[27] The crypt is connected to the church by a staircase, also cut into the rock and covered with a barrel vault (Fig. 3.8).[28] A second entrance is located at the centre of the eastern side of the crypt and leads via another staircase to a gallery (Fig. 3.9).

This gallery occupied the whole eastern side of the hill and can be reconstructed with two stories (Fig. 3.10). Its lower floor is well preserved: once fourteen cross vaults, carried by columns and spur-walls, originally divided the gallery into single segments. At its centre is an apse which only becomes visible from inside the building. Here, a prominent entrance with a double column and a small forecourt leads into the gallery. An arch in the middle of the apse serves to emphasize a staircase which leads to the crypt as well as to the second story of the gallery (Fig. 3.9). Although this second story is distinctly less well preserved, some parts of walls and floors remain. It seems likely that the second story was constructed in the same way as the first one: For one thing, more columns were found than were needed for the first floor, at least some of which must have originated from a second story. In addition, a small half-round wall on top of the apse of the first story leads to the assumption that the second story of the gallery had a central apse as well. This middle part of the gallery also served as the substructure for the church: The apse of the church did not occupy the hill like the rest of the church. Instead, it was moved forwards on top of the other apses of the gallery (Fig. 3.3).

Three staircases connected this daring construction with the church: One each led from the southern and the northern aisle to the gallery. The northern staircase is comparably large and representative and probably had its own roof. The third staircase connected the apses of the gallery with the crypt, from where it was possible to reach the south aisle of the church.

Lahit formlu rölikerler – Reliquaries of the Sarcophagus Type (Antalya, 2011), pp. 54–55, nr. 4; Sabine Ladstätter, "Ein frühchristliches Reliquiar aus Ephesos und sein topographischer Kontext," in *Lebenswelten zwischen Archäologie und Geschichte. Festschrift für Falko Daim*, eds. Jörg Drauschke et al. (Mainz 2018), pp. 749–762.

26   See Helmut Buschhausen, *Die spätrömischen Metallscrinia und frühchristlichen Reliquiare* (Vienna, 1971), pp. 263–312; Urs Peschlow, "Altar und Reliquie. Form und Nutzung des frühbyzantinischen Reliquienaltars in Konstantinopel," in *Architektur und Liturgie. Kolloquiums 2006 in Greifswald* eds. Michael Altripp and Claudia Nauerth (Wiesbaden 2006), pp. 175–202, esp. pp. 195–197.

27   Concerning the repository of reliquaries see Peschlow, "Altar und Reliquie," pp. 187–195.

28   See also description above.

FIGURE 3.8   Staircase from the crypt to the church
(COURTESY OF KATINKA SEWING)

Apart from carrying the church`s apse, the exact purpose of the gallery is diffi-
cult to ascertain. But it seems reasonable that it related to the liturgy: The long
floors and staircases enabled pilgrims to circle around the crypt and reach it
from different directions. Its large dimensions of about 55 m in length, 3 m

FIGURE 3.9   Eastern side of the building complex: gallery and entrance seen in the
                foreground, crypt in the background
                (COURTESY OF KATINKA SEWING)

FIGURE 3.10   The northern part of the gallery with the remains of the vaults
                (COURTESY OF KATINKA SEWING)

width, and 3.5 m height (each gallery) suggest that it was built for a large group of people.

Besides the main elements of the building mentioned above – church, crypt, and gallery – for the interpretation as a pilgrimage church it is important to point out the numerous connections between them: several staircases connect the crypt to the church, the church to the gallery, the gallery to the crypt and vice versa. Most of these staircases are inside the building complex. But one even forms its own structural element at the northern side of the hill. In addition to the striking number of staircases, several entrances led into the complex. The main entrance was in the west via a monumental staircase which begins at the harbour canal and leads up the hill to the church (not shown in Fig. 3.3.).[29] At the top, the pilgrims could enter the narthex and then make their way through the south door into the church. This becomes clear from the strong signs of wear on the in situ preserved doorsteps. It seems that the north entrance was almost never used (nearly no signs of wear) and the main entrance to the nave was opened probably only for high feast days (little signs of wear).

The second prominent entrance is in the east and leads from the lower apse of the gallery to its second story as well as into the crypt. This east view must have been very representative as well. The frontage, consisting of the two-storied gallery and the church above, was visible from afar and formed a landmark for visitors approaching by sea.

2   A Late Antique Pilgrimage Site

The arrangement of the individual architectural elements already points to an interpretation of the site as a pilgrimage complex.[30] Nevertheless, this interpretation deserves a more detailed examination. In general, derived from better known pilgrimage sites, the two main characteristics for a pilgrimage

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29 A comparable setting is at the St. Philip Martyrion in Hierapolis. This sanctuary is situated above the city at the slope of a mountain. To reach the church and the martyrion, it is necessary to climb up a long staircase. A bathing house next to the staircase was used for ritual purification. In this way, the staircase became part of the liturgy. See Francesco D'Andria, "Il santuario e la tomba dell'apostolo Filippo a Hierapolis di Frigia," *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia. Rendiconti* 84 (2011–12), pp. 1–52.

30 Although an identification as a pilgrimage site without any further information, such as inscriptions or literary sources, usually remains rather vague. See also Robert Osterhout, "Pilgrimage Architecture," in *Egeria. Monuments of Faith in the Medieval Mediterranean*, eds. Maria Kazakou and Vasileios Skoulas (Athens 2008) pp. 47–57, esp. p. 57.

church are: first, a building complex that expanded over a period of time,[31] and second, additional facilities for the cult such as large forecourts and ambulatories or special entrances to crypts, as well as xenodochia, cisterns and shops.[32] Both conditions result in a great variety of architectural solutions for pilgrimage sites. There is no uniform pattern recognizable, apart from the mentioned elements.

It is conspicuous, that the building complex in Pamucak was built in one single building phase and shows no signs of a slowly grown expansion. Otherwise, the structure offers other main features for an interpretation as a pilgrimage site. The extraordinary layout contains several ambulatories in form of staircases and galleries and two special entrances, which provides enough space for the circulation of pilgrims. Furthermore, it has a crypt and a reliquary.

The Pamucak crypt offers full access to the worshippers. Here, the pilgrims could see, venerate, or probably even touch the relic.[33] Eslewhere from Late Antiquity, there are examples of crypts with an open access for pilgrims, and sometimes these have two entries.[34] One case for this type of crypt is the one in Abu Mena, Egypt. Here, the crypt was expanded over centuries to a comfortable place of worship, providing two staircases for an easy circulation.[35] Another variant of a full access crypt is in Cilicia, at the venerated cave of St. Thecla. This crypt is located below the church, but not directly connected. It

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31   E. g. St. John in Ephesus or Saint Thecla in Cilicia; see Hansgerd Hellenkemper, "Frühe christliche Wallfahrtstätten in Kleinasien," in *Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie 1991* (Münster, 1995) pp. 259–271, esp. pp. 260–264.

　　　For a wider overview on pilgrimage architecture see Osterhout, "Pilgrimage Architecture," pp. 47–57.

32   See Jürgen Christern, *Das frühchristliche Pilgerheiligtum von Tebessa. Architektur und Ornamentik einer spätantiken Bauhütte in Nordamerika* (Wiesbaden, 1976), pp. 264–273; Susanne Bangert, "The Archaeology of Pilgrimage: Abu Mina and Beyond" in *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*, eds. David Gwynn and Susanne Bangert (Leiden, 2010), pp. 291–328, esp. p. 297.

33   Unlike the crypt at the basilica of St. John for example, where the crypt was accessible only for one priest or member of the church personnel to fulfil the dust miracle. See Andreas Pülz, "Archaeological Evidence of Christian Pilgrimage in Ephesus," *HEROM. Journal on Hellenistic and Roman Material Culture* 1 (2012), pp. 225–260, esp. pp. 230–244.

34   For a classification of late antique and byzantine crypts see Jean-Pierre Sodini, "Les cryptes d'autel paléochrétiennes: essai de classification," *Travaux et mémoires* 8 (1981), pp. 437–458; Beat Brenk, "Der Kultort, seine Zugänglichkeit und seine Besucher," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, Ergänzungsband 20.1 (1995), pp. 69–122.

35   Furthermore, the Abu Mena complex has the typical features of a pilgrimage centre (as mentioned above). See Peter Grossmann, *Abu Mena. I Die Gruftkirche und die Gruft* (Mainz, 1989); Brenk, "Kultort," pp. 104–107.

has its own entrance from outside, which also leads to an underground chapel next to the cave.[36] The chapel is comparable to the exceptional dimensions of the chapel-like crypt in Pamucak and is probably connected with the desire to celebrate the religious service close to the venerated object. The examples show that every site finds its individual solution to the given circumstances, but they do usually have certain elements in common.

Especially remarkable at the Pamucak crypt are the sophisticated ways to reach it. There are not only two staircases leading directly to the crypt to provide an easy circulation, but the church itself is also connected indirectly to the crypt by two additional external staircases as well as a two-storied gallery. Therefore, it seems that the whole building was constructed with the aim of letting pilgrims walk around the complex with the crypt as its centre. This is one of the most striking arguments for an interpretation of this building complex as a pilgrimage site: the presence of representative constructional facilities designed to lead large groups of people to a particular destination.

Based on these investigations, the interpretation of the building complex in Pamucak as a pilgrimage church is evident. But there are still some open questions: Where are the other missing features like xenodochia and shops? Why is there no continuity of cult and place? And therefore, for what reasons was this building erected? It is possible to answer these separate questions altogether, considering the larger context.

The absence of further typical features of pilgrimage centres make sense when Christian Ephesus is considered as one large unit with the bishop as its leader – and not as a conglomerate of single pilgrimage sites within the city competing against each other. Instead, Ephesus' rivalry was much more with other pilgrimage centres in Asia Minor. Therefore, the church in Pamucak did not necessarily need its own accommodation to solicit for pilgrims.[37] It seems reasonable that the pilgrims did not stay at this place for too long. They might

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36   Over the centuries, the whole area grew to a large pilgrimage centre which hosted many pilgrims. For the archaeological examination see Ernst Herzfeld, *Meriamlik und Korykos. Zwei christliche Ruinenstätten des rauhen Kilikiens* (Manchester, 1930) pp. 1–89, esp. pp. 38–46; for an overview on the cultural history see Troels Myrup Kristensen, "Landscape, Space, and Presence in the Cult of Thekla at Meriamlik," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 24 ii (2016), pp. 229–263, esp. pp. 254–262.

37   The same applies to the so-called St. Luke`s Tomb as well as to the Cave of the Seven Sleepers. Both sites are located at the periphery of the late antique city centre and no buildings related to the accommodation of pilgrims were found in these areas. For the St. Luke`s Tomb see Andreas Pülz, *Das sog. Lukasgrab in Ephesos. Eine Fallstudie zur Adaption antiker Monumente in byzantinischer Zeit* (Wien, 2010), pp. 119–125; Pülz, "Pilgrimage in Ephesus," pp. 249–252. For the Cave of the Seven Sleepers see Norbert Zimmermann, "Das Sieben-Schläfer-Zömeterium in Ephesos. Neue Forschungen zu Baugeschichte und

have left after some time to continue their journey to Ephesus and visit its other pilgrimage highlights. Consequently, the pilgrims would have stayed overnight somewhere close to or inside the city centre. It is very likely that a new city centre – parallel to the old one – grew close by the Basilica of St. John. Since St. John was certainly the main destination for most of the pilgrims, it seems highly likely that the accommodation for the pilgrims was in that area as well.[38]

The special location of the sanctuary in Pamucak also defines its relation to the city of Ephesus. The geological situation, the transformation from a small island to mainland, must have been an attractive opportunity, especially since the canal silted up and became increasingly impassable for large ships.[39] By choosing this specific landmark it was possible to combine a merely functional use with religious ideas. The site was ideal for ships to land, and to carry pilgrims to the pilgrimage church, who could then continue their journey to Ephesus.[40] A similar concept can be seen in the late antique settlement of Andriake, the harbour of Myra in Lycia, about 400 km south of Ephesus along the coast.[41] It seems likely that Andriake served as a stopover for pilgrims who came to venerate St. Nicholas. They might have even had to wait in Andriake, prepare and organize themselves before reaching their actual destination in Myra. Over the centuries, the city of Andriake itself grew and became home to at least five churches.[42] Further 500 km along the coast towards east, another

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  Ausstattung eines ungewöhnlichen Bestattungskomplexes," in *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes in Wien* 80 (2011), pp. 365–407.

38 Since the modern city of Selçuk has been built over possible remains, there are few structures preserved to prove this assumption archaeologically. See Louis Reekmans, "Siedlungsbildung bei spätantiken Wallfahrtsstätten," in *Pietas. Festschrift für Bernhard Kötting*, eds. Ernst Dassmann and Karl Suso Frank (Münster, 1980), pp. 325–355, esp. pp. 339–341; Andreas Pülz, "Das Stadtbild von Ephesos in byzantinischer Zeit, " in *Byzanz – das Römerreich im Mittelalter* 2,2, eds. Falko Daim and Jörg Drauschke (Mainz, 2010), pp. 541–571, esp. pp. 567–568.

39 This is recorded by a Coptic text of the 5th century, see Helmut Engelmann, "Der ephesische Hafen in einer koptischen Erzählung," in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 112 (1996), p. 134.

40 The patriarch of Alexandria, Cyril, reports about transferring into a smaller boat at an outer harbour. Unfortunately, he keeps silent about a pilgrimage church at the canal; see Steskal, "Ephesos and its Harbors," p. 337 with fn. 35.

41 On pilgrimage centres and routes see Andreas Külzer, "Pilgerzentren in Kleinasien: Heilige, Orte und Wege," in *Für Seelenheil und Lebensglück. Das byzantinische Pilgerwesen und seine Wurzeln*, eds. Despoina Ariantzi – Ina Eichner (Mainz 2018), pp. 163–174.

42 See Philipp Niewöhner, "Andriake in byzantinischer Zeit," in *40 Jahre Grabung Limyra*, ed. Mertin Seyer (Wien, 2012), pp. 223–240; T. Engin Akyürek, "Andriake: The Port of Myra in Late Antiquity," in *Trade in Byzantium. Papers from the Third International Sevgi Gönül*

comparable example can be found in a late antique settlement at Boğsak Adası, a small island, close to the coast of the sanctuary of Saint Thecla in Cilicia. A martyrion at the highest point on the island – obviously without any cult continuity – seems to have served as an attraction for pilgrims on their way to Saint Thecla.[43] Here, as well as in Pamucak, the landmark could be defined retrospectively as a mythological-religious space. It seems that the reason for establishing the settlement at Boğsak Adası was to accommodate pilgrims who were already on their pilgrimage but whose actual destination was probably completely different. The examples from Pamucak, Andriake, and Boğsak Adası show one common concept in different variations. It seems that these places served as a first stop before reaching the main destination. It was probably an opportunity to organize and prepare for the next steps of the pilgrimage. Pilgrims could gather together and offer the veneration, first prayers could be held. It becomes apparent that common approaches to the establishing and the organization of pilgrimage centres can be used at different locations along the coast of Asia Minor.

Still remarkable are the high efforts that have been made to build the Pamucak complex.[44] At first sight, it might be quite surprising to construct such a large-scale building outside of Ephesus; especially, since the place has no historical or mythological background. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume an overarching strategy for the site, connected to the ecclesiastical buildings in and around the city centre of Ephesus.[45] By choosing this exact place, about seven kilometres away from the city centre, the ecclesiastical authorities could widen their territory. They assumed control over the entrance to the region from the sea – namely the harbour canal. With this decision, Christian Ephesus demonstrated its still growing claim to power within the 5th century.[46] Of

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Byzantine Studies Symposium, eds. Paul Magdalino and Nevra Necipoğlu (Istanbul, 2016), pp. 465–487, esp. pp. 469, 471, 476–477.

43   See Günder Varinlioğlu, "'Built Like a City': Boğsak Island (Isauria) in Late Antiquity," in *New Cities in Late Antiquity. Documents and Archaeology*, ed. Efthymios Rizos (Turnhout, 2017), pp. 247–266, esp. pp. 257–265. I would like to thank Günder Varinlioğlu for our fruitful discussions and sharing the results of her work with me.

44   Also, in order to settle Boğsak Adası, significant new infrastructure was needed on the small rocky island. See Varinlioğlu, "Boğsak Island," p. 257.

45   A similar strategy and presentation of a holy landscape can be detected in and around Resafa/Sergiupolis, see Axel Schuhmann "Die Entwicklung der Sakraltopographie von Resafa/Sergiupolis und die Inszenierung des Ortes als Stätte des Sergiosmartyriums," in *Für Seelenheil und Lebensglück. Das byzantinische Pilgerwesen und seine Wurzeln*, eds. Despoina Ariantzi – Ina Eichner (Mainz 2018), pp. 59–72.

46   Already at the turn of the 5th century, the Church was one of the most powerful landlords in Ephesus; see Külzer, "Ephesos in byzantinischer Zeit," p. 532.

equal importance was certainly the acquisition of relics. Consequently, there must have been a translation of relics to or at least within Ephesus.[47] Unfortunately, little is known about venerated relics, saints, or martyrs and their location within Ephesus, except for the popular ones like St. John or the Seven Sleepers.[48] Therefore, it is not yet possible to attribute the sanctuary to a particular saint.[49]

3   Conclusion

Summarizing the general architectural and archaeological features, it can be determined that the complex was constructed in one large building phase during the early 5th century. No traces of previous structures could be detected. Later building and decoration phases, such as a later added marble floor, point to a utilization phase at least up to the 7th century.[50] The complex can be reconstructed as a three-aisled basilica on top of the hill to which a monumental staircase leads from the harbour canal up to its narthex. Underneath the church is a large crypt, which forms the architectural centre of the structure. The crypt defines the east-west axis and is highlighted by its own entrance in the east. A two-storied gallery that also served as substructure for the church covered the whole eastern side of the hill. The gallery as well as several staircases provide ample connection between the separate architectural elements.

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47   Considering the size of the church complex as well as the scale of the crypt, the relics might have been quite prominent. Concerning the value of relics see Andreas Külzer, "Handelsgüter und Verkehrswege: Wirtschaftliche Aspekte byzantinischer Pilgerzentren," in *Handelsgüter und Verkehrswege. Aspekte der Warenversorgung im östlichen Mittelmeerraum (4. bis 15. Jahrhundert)*, eds. Ewald Kislinger, Johannes Koder, and Andreas Külzer (Vienna, 2010), pp. 185–196, esp. p. 186.

48   For an analysis of the written sources see Renate Pillinger, "Martyrer und Reliquienkult in Ephesos," in *Synergia. Festschrift für Friedrich Krinzinger*, ed. Barbara Brandt, Verena Gassner, and Sabine Ladstätter (Wien, 2005), pp. 235–241; Andreas Külzer, "Ephesos in byzantinischer Zeit: Ein historischer Überblick," in *Byzanz – das Römerreich im Mittelalter* 2,2, eds. Falko Daim and Jörg Drauschke (Mainz, 2010), pp. 521–539, esp. 531–533; on the localization of pilgrimage sites in Ephesus see Pülz, "Pilgrimage in Ephesus," pp. 225–256.

49   Concerning the problems of attributing pilgrimage sites in Ephesus see Pülz, *Lukasgrab*, pp. 125–127.

50   Recent paleo-geographical research revealed that a mole directly on the other side of the canal – but not necessarily of the pilgrimage church itself – might have been in use up to the 11th century; Stock et al., "Coastline Changes" (forthcoming). Scattered sherds date from the end of the 4th century up to the 7th century.

Within the known canon of late antique pilgrimage churches, it is a unique structure so far.

Based on the reconstruction of the building complex alone, an interpretation as a pilgrimage site is apparent: the prominent structure, the crypt with its representative connecting corridors as well as the reliquary, all point to this conclusion. Furthermore, the isolated position seems to exclude other interpretations: It is away from the city centre of Ephesus and probably without any connection to a local community.

It is possible to assume that the church complex in Pamucak was initially built for strategic and economic reasons.[51] The religious aspect might have been defined retrospectively with the acquisition of relics and a mythological narration concerning the place of veneration. This construct could grow in its importance and perhaps also change over time. The occasion for the construction of the building might have been part of an overarching concept by the Christian authorities to widen their territory and to strengthen Ephesus as a pilgrimage city.[52]

Furthermore, it was not only the building itself that was highly representative, but also the position where it was founded. This pilgrimage church was most likely the very first prominent building to be seen by everyone who reached Ephesus by sea. Its position on a hill, both, directly at the coastline and at the harbour canal must have been quite impressive. Due to its location, size, and unique architecture, the Pamucak complex seems to have been a flagship of Christian Ephesus, although not its main attraction. In establishing this new sanctuary, Ephesus could improve its status as a Christian city in general.

Already in earlier periods, the sea-route accessibility has been a vital element in enabling Ephesus to become a well-known pilgrimage centre.[53] Thus, it seems clear that the connection to the sea must have been of particular importance. Accordingly, the pilgrimage church that first welcomed the voyagers at this place held a special rank within the Ephesian pilgrimage sites. From here, and vice versa, concepts of organisation, infrastructure and religious ideas could circulate around late antique Asia Minor.

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51 For economic important activities concerning pilgrims, like accommodation, supplies, souvenirs, and feasts, see Hansgerd Hellenkemper, "Frühe christliche Wallfahrtsstätten in Kleinasien", pp. 268–270; Külzer, "Handelsgüter," pp. 185–196.

52 According to the city`s reputation, Ephesus was quite successful in such endeavours. See Pülz, "Pilgrimage in Ephesus," p. 256; Bangert, "Archaeology of Pilgrimage," p. 316.

53 Külzer, "Handelsgüter," pp. 187–189, 191.

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"Slavery" outside the Slave Trade

The Movement and Status of Captives between Byzantine Calabria and the Islamic World

Adele Curness

> Italy ends at Rome. Naples, Sicily, Calabria, and all the rest are part of Africa.[1]
>
> AN ANONYMOUS TRAVELLER ON THE GRAND TOUR

The physical proximity of North Africa has long preoccupied the rulers and peoples of the Italian Peninsula. The Romans feared invasion from a powerful Punic civilisation based around Carthage and strove to conquer and colonise the region, absorbing it, like Egypt, into the apparently monolithic cultural and political entity that encircled the Mediterranean Sea.[2] The fear of non-Roman North Africa which persisted millennia ago still runs through the political culture of modern Italy, in Rome, but particularly in the southernmost province of the Italian mainland: Calabria. The region, owing to its geographical position, forms the first point of refuge on the mainland for refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean at its most dangerous points, from Libya and Tunisia. In Calabria, the influx of the desperate has further unbalanced a precarious society rife with poverty, where Mafia power remains unchallenged, and has ignited a debate about southern Italy and Africa's positions in a connected Mediterranean and whether or not a shared Mediterranean culture and history can be said to exist.[3]

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1   Pasquale Verdicchio, "The Preclusion of Postcolonial Discourse in Southern Italy" in *Revisioning Italy,* eds. B. Allen and M. Russo (Minneapolis, 1997), p. 193.

2   See, for example, Dexter Hoyos, *Mastering the West: Rome and Carthage at War* (New York, 2015).

3   The speech given by far-right leader Matteo Salvini in Lamezia, near Reggio Calabria in May 2016 is instructive here. Salvini describes the migrant crisis as an 'invasion' of Calabria, says that people in the south are punished because the government in Rome is the lapdogs of the EU and Angela Merkel, and that the government is wrong to describe attempts to safeguard Italian (Catholic) culture as xenophobic and racist. Salvini's party, the *Lega,* traditionally only popular in the north of Italy, have been increasingly successful in Calabrian elections.

These debates, which thrive on anti-government and anti-European Union rhetoric, take a form recognisable to many European political commentators. However, it is striking to note the apparent similarities between the concerns of modern Calabrians and the concerns of their ancestors living during the ninth and tenth centuries, as the Muslim conquest of Sicily was gradually completed. Calabria, then the westernmost outpost of the Byzantine Empire, was assaulted by seemingly incessant waves of Muslim attacks across the fiercely contested Mediterranean border between the Christian and Islamic worlds; attacks which devastated and impoverished the region without appearing to encourage any positive cultural or economic exchange.[4]

The sources for this period are replete with stories of danger and destruction wrought by the Arabs.[5] Many examples of Muslim violence against Calabrian Christians are given, but one that stands out above all is the palpable fear of being taken captive by the Arabs. Chronicles and annals record heavy losses with each Arab raid, with captives often numbering into the tens of thousands, and themes of safety and freedom run through stylised and narrative sources.[6]

It may, then, seem striking that Byzantine Calabria is largely absent from much recent discourse on slavery in medieval Europe.[7] Historiography relating to the slave trade in 'Italy' often focuses exclusively on Venice, and its role in a

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Indeed, Calabria was the only region south of Rome to return a majority for the *Lega* in the 2018 Italian presidential elections. (http://www.quotidianodelsud.it/calabria/politica/2016/05/24/elezioni-salvini-calabria-sostenere-lega-nord-terza-visita-due-anni).

4   Nicola Cilento, "Le incursioni saraceniche in Calabria" in *Atti del 4° Congresso Storico Calabrese (Cosenza 1966)* (Naples, 1969), pp. 209–233; Alberto Ventura, "Gli emiri in Italia" in *Maometto in Europa: Arabi e Turchi in Occidente, 622–1922,* ed. Francesco Gabrieli (Milan, 1982), pp. 81–109; Stefano Del Lungo, *Bahr 'as Shām: la presenza musulmana nel Tirreno centrale e settentrionale nell'alto medioevo* (Oxford, 2000), p. 71; Enzo D'Agostino, *Da Locri a Gerace: Storia di una diocesi della Calabria bizantina dalle origini al 1480* (Soveria Manelli, Catanzaro, 2004), pp. 76–77; Amedeo Feniello, *Sotto il segno del leone. Storia dell'Italia musulmana* (Bari, 2011); Marco Di Branco and Kordula Wolf, "Hindered Passages: The Failed Muslim Conquest of Southern Italy", *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 1.1 (2014), pp. 52–53.

5   *The Life of St Elias Speleotes,* Acta Sanctorum Septembris III (Antwerp, 1750 Ch. 8, in which the saint's companion is murdered; *The Life of St Neilos of Rossano* ed. Germano Giovanelli, *Βίος καί πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου πατρός ἡμῶν Νείλου τοῦ Νέου* (Badia di Grottaferrata, 1972) Ch. 23, in which the saint is assaulted by the devil in the guise of an Arab; *The Life of St Vitalis of Castronovo*, Acta Sanctorum Martii II (Antwerp, 1668) Ch. 14, in which the saint defeats, with a miracle, a group of Arabs who are attempting to rob his monastery.

6   *The Siculo-Saracen Chronicle*, ed. Peter Schriener, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* (III Vols., Vienna, 1975–1979), p. 337.

7   Alice Rio, *Slavery After Rome 500–1100* (Oxford, 2017), for example, discusses slavery in southern Italy as a phenomenon of the Lombard or Norman worlds and largely considers the topic in relation to the history of slavery in northern Italy. There is no specific mention of Calabria,

Transalpine-Adriatic route for Slavic captives.[8] Similarly, Italy is not considered a traditional source of slaves by Islamic historians – studies of slavery in the Aghlabid and Fatimid states of North Africa again focus on the role of Slavic (and Black African) slaves in courtly society.[9] One simple explanation for this absence is that there is a lack of evidence in mainland southern Italy for the sustained Muslim economic presence needed to support a 'slave trade', in contrast to the significant quantity of Islamic coinage, and textual evidence of slave markets and other economic structures, found in northern and eastern Europe.[10]

However, a more complex, and interesting, reason to exclude Byzantine Calabria from the narrative of medieval slavery is that it is uncertain that the majority of captives were ever intended to be sold as slaves; a close reading of our sources reveals that there is a subtext, obscured by stories of community grief and devastation, that captivity was something ambiguous, cyclical, and temporary. The status of captives in Byzantine Calabria falls outside of traditional definitions of 'slavery' and 'slave trade'.

Captives were in constant circulation across the frontier between Calabria and Sicily. They were removed from and returned to their homes by a sophisticated system of ransom that formed part of the wider political and economic relationship between Calabria and Sicily and Sicily and North Africa, challenging the prevailing historiographical assumption that Islamic interactions with the region were one-sided and malign. The movement and circulation of captives across the Straits of Messina should, therefore, be studied not as something purely dark and violent but as part of the complex processes of interaction and exchange that dictate relationships across contested frontiers.

1   Sources for Middle Byzantine Calabria

The overwhelming majority of surviving sources for ninth- and tenth-century Byzantine Calabria are hagiographical. Such secular chronicles as exist are

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and the bibliography does not include any of the major Italo-Greek *Lives*, save for that of St Elias the Younger: pp. 36–37, 59, 154–156, 251–259.

8   For instance, all of the references to 'Italy' in the index of Youval Rotman, *Byzantine Slavery and the Mediterranean World* tr. Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge MA, 2009) refer to Venice; pp. 79–81 and the map on pp. 60–61 are particularly instructive for this point.

9   Craig Perry, "Historicizing Slavery in the Medieval Islamic World", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49.1 (2017), p. 134.

10   Janel Fontaine, "Early medieval slave trading in the archaeological record: comparative methodologies", *Early Medieval Europe* 24.4 (2017), pp. 466–488; Marek Jankowiak, "What does the slave trade in the Saqaliba tell us about early-Islamic slavery?", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49.1 (2017), pp. 169–172; Liudprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis* trans. P. Squatriti *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona* (Washington DC, 2007), pp. 198–199.

either brief and fragmentary, such as the tenth-century *Siculo-Saracen Chronicle* and *Cambridge Chronicle*, or produced outside of Calabria, such as the Latin *Chronicon Salernitanum*, and accordingly more concerned with local events.[11]

The hagiography is, in contrast, rich in its description of Calabria and is accepted by many scholars as providing an accurate timeline of events.[12] All of the *Lives* of Calabrian saints which survive to us mention the Arabs in some way. However, not all of the *Lives* in this Italo-Greek corpus discuss captivity.

The two longest, and most famous, *Lives* that tell us about the circulation of captives between Calabria and the Islamic world are the *Life of St Elias the Younger* and the *Life of St Neilos of Rossano*. The former was written between 930 and 940 by an anonymous monk in Elias' monastic foundation on Monte Saline (now known as Monte Sant'Elia) near the coastal town of Palmi, around 50 km north of Reggio Calabria. The hagiographer had received his information from someone, perhaps Elias' disciple Daniel, who knew the saint well.[13] Elias himself had died in 903 in Thessaloniki, having emigrated to Calabria as a young man from Enna in Sicily, where had been born in around 823.[14] Neilos of Rossano, on the other hand, was born around 910 in the city of Rossano, which is on the Ionian coast of Calabria, almost 300km north of Reggio and around 150km south of Taranto. He died in 1004 in his monastery at Grottaferrata, outside Rome.[15] His *Life* was produced around the middle of the eleventh century, by an anonymous monk who has been identified upon little real evidence as his other disciple Bartholomew.[16]

Other *Lives* which address captivity are the *Life of St Elias Speleotes*, produced around the turn of the eleventh century by an anonymous monk living in the saint's monastery in Melicuccà, Province of Reggio Calabria; the *Life of St Nikodemos of Kellerana*, produced in the mid-eleventh century by a monk

11   *The Siculo-Saracen Chronicle*; *The Cambridge Chronicle*, ed. Giuseppe Cozzo-Luzi and Bartolomeo Lagumina, *La Cronaca Siculo-Saracena di Cambridge: con doppio testo greco. Scoperto in codici contemporanei delle biblioteche vaticana e parigina con accompagnamento del testo arabico* (Palermo, 1890); *Chronicon Salernitanum*, ed. U. Westerbergh (Stockholm, 1956).

12   Annabel Wharton, *Art of Empire: Painting and Architecture of the Byzantine Periphery* (Pennsylvania, 1988), p. 129.

13   *The Life of St Elias the Younger* ed. Giuseppe Rossi Taibbi, *Vita di Sant'Elia il Giovane* (Palermo, 1962), pp. xvi-xxi.

14   Enrica Follieri, "I Santi dell'Italia Greca", *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* 34 (1997), pp. 13–15.

15   The text of Neilos' *Life* is Giovanelli, Βίος καί πολίτεία. I have opted to use this edition over that produced by Raymond Capra et al., *The Life of Saint Neilos of Rossano* (Cambridge MA, 2018) owing to Giovanelli's preferable approach to the manusripts.

16   Giovanelli, Βίος καί πολίτεία, pp. 12–22; *idem.*, *Vita di S. Nilo, fondatore e patrone di Grottaferrata* (Badia di Grottaferrata, 1966), pp. 6–11; Follieri, "I Santi dell'Italia Greca", pp. 23–27; *idem.*, "Per una nuova edizione della Vita di San Nilo da Rossano", *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* 60 (1997), pp. 71–92.

named Neilos (no connection to the saint of the same name) in the monastery of St Elias the Younger on Monte Sant'Elia; and the *Life of St John Theristes*, produced in the mid-twelfth century by an anonymous monk living in the saint's monastery in Stilo, Province of Reggio Calabria.[17] All of these *Lives* survive in Greek and all circulated mainly or exclusively within Calabrian communities, either in the province itself or in émigré communities elsewhere in Italy. The cults of these various saints do not seem to have left southern Italy, where many of our subjects are still enthusiastically venerated today.[18]

Significantly, we lack accounts of southern Italian martyrs and none of the saints who feature in the Calabrian *Lives* meet violent deaths or suffer violence at Arab hands themselves. The only two martyrologies which have come down to us are the *Martyrdom of Andrew, John, Peter, and Antony* carried off to Africa and barbarically tortured and killed during the capture of Syracuse in 878, and the *Life of St Philaretos the Martyr* who was killed, together with some other Christians, during the 831 capture of Palermo.[19] Both are very brief and lacking any significant detail. They also have a Sicilian provenance and do not appear to have circulated in mainland Italy itself; rather, they are preserved in the *Synaxarion* of Constantinople and venerated in the imperial Church.

With the theme of torture and death absent, the theme of captivity runs throughout the Italo-Greek *Lives*, often in a way that is deeply evocative and human. The descriptions of the saints' encounters with captivity, loss, and fear are some of the most moving scenes in the hagiography and seem on the surface to articulate the profound psychological impact Arab raids had on Calabrian communities. Nonetheless, as literary works, should we take the *Lives'* description of captivity at face value? After all, saints freeing captives is a trope found in hagiography across all times and spaces in the Christian world.[20] The *topos* has received much attention in studies of the literature of Western Europe, in which its dominance, and the relegation of traditional healing miracles that accompanies it, is often argued to reflect a widespread community

17   *The Life of St Nikodemos of Kellerana* ed. Melina Arco Magrì, *Vita di S. Nicodemo di Kellerana* (Rome, 1969); *The Life of St John Theristes* ed. Silvano Borsari, 'Vita di san Giovanni Terista', *Archivio Storico per la Calabria e la Lucania* 22 (1953), pp. 135–151.

18   David Paul Hester, *Monasticism and Spirituality of the Italo-Greeks* (Thessaloniki, 1991), pp. 165–253.

19   *Andrew, John, Peter, and Antony*, Acta Sanctorum Novembris Propylaeum (Brussels, 1902); *Philaretos*, Acta Sanctorum Aprilis I (Antwerp, 1675). The martyrdom in Palermo of a monk called Argentios in August 906, which is not attested elsewhere, is recorded in *The Siculo-Saracen Chronicle*, pp. 336, and *The Cambridge Chronicle*, p. 40.

20   Thomas Pratsch, *Der hagiographische Topos* (Berlin, 2005), pp. 259–263.

fear of the breakdown of traditional models of government and protection in an increasingly violent society.[21]

A similar interpretation for the southern Italian hagiography has recently been advanced in an article by Jonathan Conant, which asserts that the texts were written in order to allow Calabrian communities devastated by Arab attacks to voice their collective trauma and desire for retribution against both the Saracens and the Empire that they believed had abandoned them.[22] Conant's argument, modelled heavily on Peter Brown's influential conception of the 'holy man', is that ascetic, outsider saints were used by communities to criticise imperial inactivity in the face of mass enslavement of Calabrians.[23] The apparent audience of the texts seems to support this. André Guillou has identified several stylistic features, particularly highly repetitive narratives written in simple, colloquial language, in Italo-Greek texts, which he uses as evidence that they were intended for oral transmission to a rural public.[24] I am prepared to accept that the texts may have had a public audience throughout the year, although I would dispute the suggestion that they were primarily produced for this purpose, rather than for the glorification of the saintly founders of the monasteries in which they were written. The texts as they survive are not then, in contrast to Conant's thesis, tools for the use of the community. Furthermore, his reading of the corpus as conduits for outrage relies on the captivity faced by Calabrians being slavery in the truest sense: oppressive and permanent. If, as is in fact the case, captivity in Byzantine Calabria was more ambiguous and temporary, how must we approach these *Lives*?

2   The Movement of Captives in Calabria – Evidence of Cyclical Exchange?

The sense of the texts as a canvas onto which the families of the enslaved could project their own situation is present in many of the depictions of captivity in

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21   *The Book of Sainte Foy* ed. Pamela Sheingorn (Pennsylvania, 1995), pp. 13–16.

22   Jonathan Conant, "Anxieties of Violence: Christians and Muslims in Conflict in Aghlabid North Africa and the Central Mediterranean", *Al-Masaq* 27.1 (2015), p. 9.

23   *ibid.*; Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity", *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971) pp. 80–101, and Brown's reconsideration of his earlier argument, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity, 1971 – 1997", *The Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6.3 (1998), pp. 353–376; Rosemary Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 843–1118* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 109.

24   André Guillou, "Grecs d'Italie du Sud et de Sicile au moyen âge: les moines", *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 75 (1963), p. 100.

the hagiography. In contrast to scenes where the saints themselves, or their close disciples, are taken, depictions of ordinary members of the community being captured are deeply formulaic. One example of this can be seen in the *Life of St Elias the Younger*. The longest account of Elias' release of a prisoner concerns a man of an uncertain social position taken during the 901 Arab attack on Reggio Calabria and takes place at least a year later, sometime after their 902 attack on Taormina. Elias is petitioned by the man's mother-in-law, whose faith is so strong that she ignores the saint's requests to leave him alone. This process of petitioning is itself a hagiographical trope. Moved by her situation he tells her the man will be released, and the miracle soon results in his return home. Because the former captive too is a man of great faith, his first action is to visit the saint, where he describes his ordeal:

> Ἐγὼ ἐν τῇ φρουρᾷ ἤμην καθειργμένος καὶ καθ' ἑκάστην προσδοκῶν τὸν διὰ ξίφους θάνατον. Καὶ ἐν μιᾷ τῶν νυκτῶν περὶ τὸ μεσονύκτιον θεωρῶ τὴν θύραν τοῦ δεσμωτηρίου ὥσπερ ἀνοιγομένην, καὶ γέροντα τινα εἰσερχόμενον μοναχὸν φωτὶ λάμποντα καὶ φωτίζοντα ὅλον το οἴκημα, τὴν ὑπήνην ἔχοντα βαθεῖαν καὶ ὁλοπόλιον, τὴν ἡλικίαν δὲ ὑποκόλοβον· καὶ παραστὰς ἱλαρῷ τῷ προσώπῳ, λέγει μοι· 'Βασίλειε...ἀναστὰς εξελθε καὶ πορεύου ὅθεν ἦλθες...Ἐγὼ εἰμι Ἡλίας ὁ μοναχὸς, ὁ ὑπὸ τῆς σῆς πενθερᾶς εὔχεσθαι δυσωπηθεὶς ὑπὲρ σοῦ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ Σαλινῶν...ἐξελθε καὶ πορεύου μετ' εἰρήνες εἰς τὴν πατρίδα σου.'
>
> I found myself locked up and every day I expected death by the sword. But one night, around midnight, it seemed to me as though the door of the prison opened and an elderly monk came in, in a light that shone throughout the place. He had a long beard, all white, and he stooped. He approached me with a smiling face and said to me "Basil...get up, leave, and return whence you came...I am the monk Elias, who your mother-in-law was supplicating with prayers for your salvation in the place of Saline...leave and go in peace to your homeland."[25]

The passage is noticeably vague: only the mention of Monte Saline gives it a Calabrian context. Elias' description could refer to many Orthodox saints, the man's name is not recognisably Italian, and no mention is made of his captors' identity or the location in which he is being held. For Conant, this lack of detail serves as a psychological tool to allow the audience to project their own situation onto the narrative, using the miracle of the man's return home to comfort themselves in the face of their loss.

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25   *Life of St Elias the Younger* Ch. 55.

I, however, believe that passages such as this one reflect a very different situation. Rather than being the result of divine intervention, the man's release reflects the actual fate of many Calabrian captives: he was being held in a prison specifically to acquire a ransom, this ransom was paid, and he returned home to await the cycle of capture and exchange beginning once more. By reading this episode in this way, the captivity experienced by Calabrians can be situated within a Byzantine industry devoted to the release of captured people across the Mediterranean. Economic evidence gathered by Youval Rotman has revealed Byzantine agents operating in Egypt and Ifrīqiya, tasked specifically to arrange the ransom and release of prisoners, and, where possible, to intercept captives before a ransom could be demanded and they created a financial burden on the Byzantine state.[26] I contend that we should add Sicily and Calabria as further sites where this cycle of exchange took place.

Our sources offer plenty of evidence in support of this reading. Earlier in the *Life of St Elias the Younger* the saint himself is captured, along with 220 other prisoners, and loaded onto an Arab ship which sails from Syracuse.[27] As Elias becomes distraught at the thought of being separated from his parents, he has a vision of Ananias of Damascus, who tells us that God will intervene to free him.[28] The apparition of Ananias orders the Arab sailors to:

Ἀναστρέψαντες ταχέως ἀπολύσατε τὸν ὁδεῖνα παῖδα· δοῦλος γάρ ἐστι τοῦ Θεοῦ· εἰ δὲ μή, παραδοθήσεσθε σήμερον στρατιωτικαῖς Ῥωμαίων χερσίν

Turn back quickly and release this boy, for he is a slave of God. And if you do not, today you will be handed over to Roman soldiers.[29]

The narrative then becomes far more mundane. Elias' release is secured by a coastguard also coming from Syracuse, who intercepts the boat and, as foretold, captures the Arabs. The young saint is returned, rejoicing, to his parents.[30] The coastguard should certainly be taken as one of the Byzantine agents described by Rotman, but the Arabs can also be viewed as active participants in

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26   Youval Rotman, "Captif ou esclave? Entre marché d'esclaves et marché de captifs en Méditerranée medieval" in *Les esclavages en Méditerranée: Espaces et dynamiques économiques,* eds. Fabienne Guillén and Salah Trabelsi (Madrid, 2012), pp. 31–35.

27   *Life of St Elias the Younger* Ch. 6.

28   *ibid*. Ch. 7.

29   *ibid*. Ch. 7.

30   *ibid*. Ch. 8. A very similar story is told in the *Life of St Bartholomew of Simeri* ed. Gaia Zaccagni, "Il Bios di San Bartolomeo da Simeri (BHG 235)", *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici* 33 (1996), c. 24.

the exchange.[31] The Arab ship has, we are told, been at sea for eight hours. If this Arab vessel were moving, the Byzantine ship would need to have left Syracuse almost as soon as the raiding ship did to have been able to catch up with it. If, however, the Arab ship was stationary, the swift arrival of the Byzantine ship is not so unusual.

It would not be so strange for this to have been the case. In his study of Italian captives taken by Barbary pirates in the early-modern period, Robert Davis describes how corsairs would take captives from Sicily and Calabria, spend a couple of days waiting at sea, and then return to shore to allow the relatives of those captured to board and negotiate their release.[32] Only those who could not secure a suitable ransom were taken into North Africa and sold as slaves, something for which there is also evidence in the *Life of John Theristes*. John's mother is taken to Palermo following a raid on her native Stilo, where she is bought by an important Arab with whom she has an ambiguous relationship.[33] The hagiographer makes sure to note that she is sold rather than ransomed because her husband, John's father, was killed in this raid.[34]

A more explicit description of the industry accompanying the circulation of captives appears in the *Life of St Neilos of Rossano*. Three monks are captured from the saint's monastery at San Demetrio Corone, Province of Cosenza during a raid led by the Kalbid *emir* al-Qāsim in 978. In contrast to the atmosphere of grief and panic we would expect, Neilos responds to these missing monks in an entirely business-like fashion and they are soon rescued by a system of regional diplomacy:

ʼΕπισυνάξας τοίνυν ἀπό τε σίτου καὶ οἴνου καὶ καρποῦ ἑτέρου μέχρι τῶν ἑκατὸν χρυσίνων, καὶ βορδόνιον, ὃ ἦν αὐτῷ δεδωκὼς Βασίλειος ὁ στρατηγὸς Καλαβρίας, καὶ δοὺς αὐτὰ τινὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν λίαν δοκιμωτάτῳ, ἀπέστειλεν αὐτὸν ἐν Πανόρμῳ, γράψας ἐπιστολὴν πρὸς τὸν νοτάριον τὸν τοῦ ἐκεῖσε φυλάρχου χριστιανικώτατον καὶ φιλευσεβῆ τυγχάνοντα.

Ὅστις νοτάριος, ὑποδείξας τῷ λεγομένῳ ʼΑμμηρᾷ τὰ παρὰ τοῦ ὁσίου σταλέντα, ἑρμηνεύσας δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν θαυμασίαν ἐκείνην ἐπιστολήν, κατεπλάγη ἐπὶ τῇ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει τοῦ μακαριωτάτου, ἐπιγνοὺς αὐτὸν φίλον τοῦ Θεοῦ ὄντα.

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31   We are told that Elias comes from a wealthy family: *Life of St Elias the Younger* Ch. 3.

32   Robert Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800* (Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 43–44.

33   It is not clear, for example, if she is forced into sexual slavery in the harem or if she eventually chooses to engage in a consensual relationship with the Arab. John is raised as the man's own son.

34   *Life of St John Theristes* Ch. 1.

So therefore, having scraped together from bread and wine and other produce the sum of 100 gold coins, alongside a mare, donated by Basil, the *strategos* of Calabria, he gave these things to one of the brothers who was most trustworthy and sent him to Palermo with a letter to the secretary of the leader of that place, who was a deeply Christian man and very devout.

That notary read the dispatch from the holy man to the one they call an *Emir*, and he added an explanation of the wonderful letter; [the *emir*] was stunned by the wisdom and prudence of the most blessed man, and he recognised that that man [Neilos] was a friend of God.[35]

Neilos was, no doubt, a very important man. But the involvement of the *strategos* does not seem to be purely because of his reputation, particularly as these monks are not described as being from high-status backgrounds, a fact that the hagiographer tends to mention.[36] The account reveals that the Kalbid court in Palermo was engaging in a gift-giving and letter-writing diplomacy with the Byzantine regional government that directly mimicked higher-level diplomatic relationships between the caliphs and emperors.[37] This mirrors evidence from non-hagiographical sources, such as the several diplomatic trips made to Ifrīqiya by Marianos Argyros when he was *strategos*, during which the liberation of Christian prisoners was a key topic of discussion.[38]

The *Lives* of Neilos and Elias are, however, unusual in showing imperial agents working to secure the release of prisoners. In most other Italo-Greek hagiography the agents are the saints themselves. Nikodemos of Kellerana, for example, brings about the release of captives from a boat through his own miraculous power, in decidedly similar circumstances to Elias the Younger's childhood ordeal.[39] Saints are also shown negotiating directly with captors. For example, Simon, a monk from an unnamed Calabrian monastery whose story in preserved in the *Synaxarion* of Constantinople, travelled into Ifrīqiya to search for a group of his fellows who had been captured. He is portrayed

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35   *Life of St Neilos of Rossano* Ch. 70–71.

36   The high-status of backgrounds of two of Neilos' monks, George and Proclus, is elaborated on at some length: *Life of Neilos of Rossano* Ch. 32–35, 40.

37   An instructive comparison is the embassy which came from Constantinople to the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz in 957 or 958: Samuel Miklos Stern, "An Embassy of the Byzantine Emperor to the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz", *Byzantion* 20 (1950), pp. 240–244.

38   Adele Cilento, *Potere e monachesimo: Ceti dirigenti e mondo monastico nella Calabria Bizantina (secoli IX–XI)* (Cosenza, 2000), pp. 29–30, 114. On Marianos Argyros specifically see *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit,* no. 24962.

39   *Life of St Nikodeomos of Kellerana*, Ch. 18.

negotiating with the *emir*, but with a religious, rather than political or economic, purpose: the captives' release is assured after the Muslims come to believe that God favours the Christian monk:

> Ὡς οὖν εἶδον οἱ βάρβαροι τὸ γεγονὸς σημεῖον, ἐξέστησαν λέγοντες. Ἐπ᾽ ἀληθείας δοῦλος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστιν ὁ μοναχὸς οὗτος. Τότε προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτὸν ὁ ἄρχων ἔφη· Τί ζητῶν εἰς τὸν τόπον τοῦτον ἐλήλυθας, ὦ καλόγηρε. Ὁ δὲ ἔφη· Τρεῖς μοναχοὺς ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ μοναστηρίου σὺν νεανίσκῳ ἑνὶ ἠχμαλωτίσθησαν καὶ ἦλθον εἰς ἀναζήτησιν αὐτῶν, εἴγε καὶ παρέξετέ μοι αὐτούς. Ὁ δὲ ἔφη· Ἐπεί, καλόγηρε, ἐπληροφορήθημεν ὅτι δοῦλος τοῦ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχεις, οὐ μόνον αὐτούς σοι παρέξομεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσους ἂν τῶν χριστιανῶν βούλῃ, λάβε καὶ ἄπελθε ἐν εἰρήνῃ.

> Thus, the barbarians saw the [healing] miracle that had occurred and were astonished, saying: 'truly this monk is a slave of God'. Then, having summoned him, the ruler said: 'What are you looking for in coming to this place, o monk?' and he said 'Three monks from my monastery, along with a boy, were taken prisoner, and I have come to search for them, if you will give them to me.' And he [the *Emir*] said: 'Since, o monk, we have been shown that you are a slave of God, we will not only hand these men over to you, but take as many Christians as you want, and go in peace.'[40]

The role of saints in negotiating the release of captives was certainly a deliberate choice by hagiographers to downplay the significance of secular authority in their writings. However, holy men and the heads of monastic foundations, as prominent figures in local communities who were intimately attuned to those communities' needs, were also likely to have been key agents in the cycle of captivity and ransom that defined Christian-Arab relations in the far south of Italy and North Africa, as bishops were in the medieval West. No matter the motivation for the release of captives given in the text, the scene was familiar to Calabrian audiences: captives were taken, negotiations held, tribute (economic or miraculous) paid, and prisoners released.

The evidence outlined by Rotman has also shown that ransom rates in the Mediterranean were directly linked, and equal to, the market value of slaves, allowing captives to be ransomed without any loss of income to the captor.[41] This guarantee of income must have been tempting to the rulers and aristocrats of Sicily and Ifrīqiya, who were expected to engage in seasonal raiding as

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40   *Simon the Monk*, Acta Sanctorum Novembris Propylaeum (Brussles, 1902), lines 37–48. A similar story is found in the *Life of St Elias the Younger* Ch. 57.

41   Rotman, "Captif ou esclave?", pp. 31–35.

part of the Islamic commandment to practise *jihād*. Communal participation in attacks on mainland Italy burnished the social position of those who took part, as well as filling their coffers with loot, but the financial burden upon the raiders was not insignificant. A successful raid upon Calabria required ships, men, and horses and the upkeep of each, often paid for privately by the raider himself. The *emirs* of Palermo and Qayrawān levied taxes and duties on raiders' incomes. The Arabs who looted Neilos of Rossano's cave and came away with nothing more than a hair shirt and some wild pears for their trouble would certainly have spent more getting to Calabria than they gained.[42] The same is true for those relying purely on the sale of slaves. Slaves may fall ill, die in ship-wrecks, or get stolen. Slave traders may struggle to find buyers for their wares or may be undercut by other traders offering lower prices or more desirable slaves. This is particularly true in regions like Sicily and Ifrīqiya where agricultural production was not plantation-based and where all slave-owners outside the highest echelons of the elite would own one or two slaves at most. Arabic and Judeo-Arabic texts reveal that these slaves were almost exclusively women of Berber or Black African origin.[43] The court slaves of the Fatimid caliphs, and therefore of their richest aristocrats and client *emirs*, were almost exclusively of Northern- or Eastern-European descent, with Black African slaves filling the caliphal armies.[44] There was, then, no guarantee that Calabrian captives would sell on the slave market, but as prisoners of war they were guaranteed to have people willing to pay at least – and probably well above – market rate for their return. This provides an economic motivation for Sicilians to participate in a cyclical exchange of captives, rather than to sell the majority as slaves.

A second economic motivation for the participation of Sicilians in this circulation of captives is the region's reliance on tribute paid by Calabria as a key source of income.[45] The tributes paid were often enormous, only outweighed by the apparent cost of human life as thousands of people were led off yearly

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42   *Life of St Neilos of Rossano* Ch. 30.

43   Craig Perry, 'The Daily Life of Slaves and the Global Reach of Slavery in Medieval Egypt, 969–1250', (PhD Thesis, Emory University, 2014), pp. 39–41, 161–166.

44   Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-ʿArḍ* ed. Johannes Hendrik Kramers and Gaston Wiet, *Configuration de la Terre* (Beirut, 1964), p. 109; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fī Maʿrifat al-Aqālīm* ed. Basil Collins, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions* (Reading, 2001), p. 200; John Hunwick, 'Black Slaves in the Mediterranean World: Introduction to a Neglected Aspect of the African Diaspora', *Slavery and Abolition* 13.1 (1992), p. 22; Yaacov Lev, 'Army, Regime, and Society in Fatimid Egypt, 358-487/968-1094', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (1987), p. 340; Jere Bacharach, 'African Military Slaves in the Medieval Middle East: The Cases of Iraq (869–955) and Egypt (868–1171)', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13.4 (1981), pp. 481–482.

45   Alex Metcalfe, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy* (Edinburgh, 2009), p. 53.

by the Arabs.[46] However, for the Calabrian population to have remained at a level capable of raising the tributes demanded, all but the unluckiest of these captives must have been hostages. The tributes paid to the Muslims must, therefore, have been largely intended as ransoms.

The economic benefit to Sicily and Ifrīqiya is obvious: a huge cash injection was guaranteed, boosted by looting during the raids; the return of captives would ensure that the booty that could be taken and the money that could be gained from Calabria in subsequent attacks was not reduced; and the return of captives also meant that the financial burden of keeping tens of thousands of slaves alive year-round was not transferred to the Islamic world.

3   The Impact of Captivity on the Demographics of Calabria

If we see the captivity in Byzantine Calabria as part of a continuous cycle of exchange, we are able to reconsider other narratives in the historiography of Byzantine Italy. The Italo-Greek *Lives* suggest there was a tenth-century population shift away from the coast and into mountain settlements, both naturally inaccessible and deliberately fortified, caused by the threat of being captured by the Arabs. Neilos of Rossano was forced to found a new monastery in the mountain town of San Demetrio Corone (about 50km inland from Rossano and very difficult to access) after an Arab incursion, in which his disciple Stephen was almost captured, had driven him from the coast.[47] Larger settlements such as Rossano and Cosenza are described in the texts explicitly in terms of their defensive capabilities, which in the case of the former is given as the reason why it has never fallen to the Arabs.[48]

This has sparked debate about whether or not the term *incastellamento* should apply to southern Italy.[49] Chris Wickham has noted that the term *kastron* was used indiscriminately to mean settlement by the tenth century, and that this has led to an overstatement of the number of fortifications in the region. Certainly, places described as *kastra* in the texts, such as the mountain town of Bisignano, near Cosenza, show no indication of having had walls or

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46   *The Cambridge Chronicle* pp. 24–48.

47   *Life of St Neilos of Rossano* Ch. 36.

48   ibid. Ch. 2, 32; Adele Coscarella, *Insediamenti bizantini in Calabria: il caso di Rossano* (Cosenza, 1996), p. 57.

49   Chris Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society, 400–1000* (London, 1981), p. 165; Stephanos Efthymiadis, "Chrétiens et Sarrasins en Italie Méridionale et en Asie Mineure (IXe – XIe siecle)" in *Histoire et Culture dans L'Italie Byzantine,* ed. André Jacob et al. (Rome, 2006), p. 590.

other major defensive structures.[50] Furthermore, as well as the number of for-
tifications being lower than the texts describe, population movement inland
also appears to have been cyclical in nature, mirroring the cycle of captivity
and ransom that accompanied Arab raids. For example, the decline of the an-
cient coastal settlement of Locri is said to have been concurrent with the ex-
pansion of the sixth-century mountain stronghold of Gerace (perched on a
vertical rock 500m high, 6km from the coast). We have evidence that the bish-
ops of Locri had transferred to Gerace by the end of the ninth century, owing
to their signatures, and the transfer of the local episcopal administration
would naturally have inspired many other citizens to move. This has resulted
in a traditional date for the area's abandonment of 915.[51] However, Jean-Marie
Martin and Ghislaine Noyé have argued for a much later dating of total aban-
donment of the settlement.[52] This evidence reveals that high-status individu-
als, such as bishops, moved inland and stayed put, which in turn inspired those
with the means to do so to follow suit. For poorer Calabrians, such as the peas-
ants who made up the majority of captives, the threat of captivity did not out-
weigh other motivations, such as the income that could be derived from the
sea, to remain in their original homes.

Indeed, the *Lives* of saints who originated in Sicily emphasise the stability of
life in Calabria in comparison to the island. One such example is found in the
Life of St Leo-Luke of Corleone, who appears to have been born around 815 in
Corleone, Sicily, fled from the Arab invasion of the island to Calabria, and died
there at the end of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century. The text cannot
be accurately dated, and the earliest manuscript is a sixteenth century Latin
translation, but its editor, Maria Stelladoro, believes it to have been produced
very soon after the saint's supposed death owing to the way it presents the
Arab threat to Calabria.[53] The text treats the Arabs as a looming rather than
present threat, which suggests a dating before Ibrāhīm II's major offensive in
901–902. Accordingly, when, as a young man, Leo-Luke was distressed by the
constant Arab threat to his monastery, St Philip at Agira (near Enna), he was
told by his elderly mentor:

50 Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy*, p. 149; Coscarella, *Insediamenti bizantini*, p. 58; Jean-Marie
Martin, "Les Thèmes Italiens: Territoire, Administration, Population" in Jacob, *Histoire et
Culture*, pp. 524–525.

51 D'Agostino, *Da Locri a Gerace*, pp. 77–78.

52 Jean-Marie Martin & Ghislaine Noyé, "Guerre, fortifications et habitats en Italie méridio-
nale du Ve au Xe siècle" in *Castrum 3: Guerre, fortification et habitats dans le monde médi-
terraneén au Moyen Age,* ed. André Bazzana (Madrid, 1988), p. 233, n. 39.

53 *The Life of St Leo-Luke of Corleone* ed. Maria Stelladoro, *La Vita di San Leone Luca di Cor-
leone* (Badia di Grottaferrata, 1995), pp. 20–24, 43–44.

'Istis in locis' inquit 'fili mi, sanctae conuersationis quietem adipisci non poteris cum et insula nosta uiolentis Agarenorum incursibus agitetur et pro certo christiano habitatore desoletur. Tamen quia caelesti, ut uideo, inspiratione uocaris ad uitae contemplatiuae dulcedinem, ad calabrensium partium, meo hortatu, necesse est te transmeara quietem'.

'My son, in these places you will not be able to reach the quiet of holy conversation, because our island is tormented by the violent incursions of the Hagarenes and is certainly uninhabitable for a Christian. However, since I see by divine inspiration that you are called to the sweetness of the contemplative life, it is necessary that you, at my request, go towards the quietness of Calabria'.[54]

A century later, the same would apply to St Vitalis of Castronovo, who was born in the town of Castronovo, 50km southeast of Palermo, in the early-to-mid-tenth century and died in Rapolla in Basilicata in 994.[55] Vitalis also began his monastic career in Agira, and similarly disheartened by the restrictions the political situation in Sicily placed on ascetic living, left St Philip's monastery and travelled to Calabria, where he wandered around the outskirts of Cassano in total security.[56]

These examples suggest that demographic insecurity in Sicily, which was undergoing significant social changes as Arab rule was consolidated, has been wrongly expanded to include Calabria. On the Italian mainland, in contrast to Sicily, demographic insecurity occurred in cycles of intensification and abatement rather than in a linear progression.

The cyclical and temporary nature of population movement is supported by the texts. As high-status figures, the saints were able to access shelter in castles when the Arabs attacked, and their *Lives* inform us that they were not expected to remain their permanently. St Luke of Demena, while in a castle near Armento (now in Basilicata, 35km south of Potenza), wept to think of his monastery being looted by the Arabs and decided to leave the security of the fortress before it was safe to do so, frightening the Arabs off as he did so with a miraculous vision.[57] Neilos' disciple, Stephen, was much less determined to overcome

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54 *Life of St Leo-Luke of Corleone*, lines 34–48.
55 Hester, *Monasticism*, p. 177.
56 *Life of St Vitalis of Castronovo*, Ch. 4; the monastery of St Philip, which no longer survives, was the most famous contemporary monastic foundation in Sicily and was probably the only one wealthy enough to endure the economic burden of *dhimmī* status. The frequent disruptions mentioned in the sources do not appear to be violent, so are likely related to encroaching Arab bureaucracy.
57 *Life of St Luke of Demena* Ch. 10–11

the Arab threat and remained in a *kastron* in the Lao valley during an Arab raid, panicking Neilos by failing to send a message to him to tell him what had happened.[58] The archaeological evidence also reveals the temporary nature of population movement. Several small fortified settlements have been excavated within the metropolitan area of Reggio Calabria that show evidence of temporary habitation. Two of these, the *kastellia* of Sambatello and Santa Agata, were hotly contested by the Arabs, who occupied the former for a period of twenty-five years in the tenth century. However, small finds reveal that both had fallen out of use by the early eleventh century, preceding the Norman conquest.[59] That this period of disuse coincides with the diminishing of Arab captive taking on the mainland is surely not coincidental. The idea of temporary withdrawal is also found in Arabic sources. The 888 attack on Reggio Calabria, which was initially successful before being destabilised by internal trouble in the Aghlabid emirate, is recorded in Arabic accounts as being called off when the invaders, arriving in Reggio, found it deserted, the population having taken refuge in the hills.[60]

We can, therefore, see the demographic changes which accompanied the threat of Arab captivity as being more flexible than has traditionally been believed, exactly as with the nature of the captivity itself. Reconsidering captivity in Byzantine Calabria as cyclical, and as part of the relationship of exchange between Christian Italy and Muslim Sicily, allows us also to reconsider other historical phenomena that took place in pre-Norman Italy.

4   Reactions against Exchange: The Purpose of the *Lives*

Finally, reading the Italo-Greek *Lives* as reflecting a world defined by relationships of exchange, in which the main threat to communities and livelihoods was often impermanent, allows us to question the purpose of the texts. If they were not conduits for rage and grief at permanent loss, what emotions were they intended to express? It is my belief that the texts served as a criticism of the relationship between Sicily and Calabria, across the confessional divide, and a rebuttal to those who participated in the circulation of captives that drove this relationship.

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58   *Life of St Neilos of Rossano* Ch. 29–30. For further examples see: *Life of St Elias the Younge*r Ch. 26; *The Life of St Leo-Luke of Corleone*, lines. 10–11.

59   Emilia Zinzi, "Le fortificazioni collinari sovrastanti Reggio. Notizie e un propost di lavoro", *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome* 103.2 (1991), pp. 740–744.

60   Nicola Ferrante, *Santi Italogreci in Calabria* (Reggio Calabria, 1981), p. 43.

This can be seen in the *Life of St Elias Speleotes*. Arsenios, Elias' master and spiritual father, is prevented three times in the text from praying for a local Christian man, by way of divine revelation as he performs the liturgy. The reason for this heavenly intervention is that the man has repeatedly refused to stop providing captives to the Arabs.[61] Those who worked to release captives, but did so because they were motivated by secular rewards, were also criticised. Neilos of Rossano firmly rebukes the metropolitan bishop Blatton, who had secured the release of several captives by participating in a display of friendship with the Fatimid ruler (probably the caliph al-Aziz[62]):

> Ἐρχόμενος ἀπὸ Ἀφρικῆς μετὰ πολλῶν αἰχμαλώτων, διὰ τὸ προσκεῖσδαι αὐτῷ ἕως καιροῦ τὸν τῶν Σαρακινῶν βασιλέα, ἐν προφάσει τοῦ ἀδελφὴν αὐτῷ εἶναι τὴν γαμετὴν ἐκείνου – ὅπερ οὐχ ἦν.
>
> He came from Africa with many captives, because at that time he was familiar with the king of the Saracens on the pretext that his sister was that man's wife – although this was not so.[63]

When Blatton's nephew, who has accompanied him on the mission, retorts that his uncle has done a noble thing in releasing the prisoners, Neilos responds that ransom is damaging to the immortal soul, which should never have a price set upon it.[64] Both of these examples feature high-status men being criticised by the saints, a common trope in hagiography across the Christian world. The captives, on the other hand, are not of high social status, something which is consistent across all the *Lives*. Many of those who are captured and then released are peasants, a group that we would not normally expect to be important enough to attract a ransom. This again illustrates the significance of the regular circulation of captives, rather than a slave trade, across the frontier separating Calabria and the Islamic world to the maintenance of political and economic relationships between the two regions.

Yet there is also a subtext which criticises the willingness of Calabrians to endure, and indeed to participate in, this cycle of captivity and ransom. Neilos' statement that Calabrians ought to be willing to languish in prison, and undoubtedly to suffer slavery or even martyrdom, rather than interact with the infidel is, for sure, a hagiographical trope. But to a Calabrian audience it was also a barb directed as those who set aside their wages to ransom their family

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61   *Life of St Elias Speleotes* Ch. 17, 19, 32.
62   Blatton, *Prosopographie der mittelbizantinischen Zeit*, no. 21184.
63   *Life of St Neilos of Rossano* Ch. 68.
64   *ibid*. Ch. 69.

members, to those who factored the possibility of losing workmen to the Arabs into their costs at harvest time, and to those who bought their own safety at the expense of others.[65]

5 Conclusion

The exchange of peoples between Byzantine Calabria and Islamic Sicily and North Africa cannot be considered 'slavery'. Rather, the majority of captives who were circulated across the Straits of Messina were never intended to be sold as slaves. Instead, captives were held in prisons in the Islamic world, awaiting ransom, by which the administrations of Sicily and Ifrīqiya earned large amounts of money. Calabrians, were certainly the junior partner in the exchange, but their participation in the cycle of captivity and release was not entirely without agency. Indeed, this cycle allowed political and economic ties to be furthered between Sicily, Ifrīqiya and the Italian mainland. It is unsurprising that this system should be negatively received in hagiographical literature, but the traditional readings of Arab violence and Calabrian devastation that have been taken from the Italo-Greek *Lives* should, nonetheless, be approached with much more caution, and Arab-Calabrian interactions be given the prominence they deserve in studies of transmission and circulation across the frontiers of the Byzantine world.

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65 An example can be found in the *Life of St Neilos of Rossano*, when the *emir* of Palermo reveals to the saint that his monastery can be exempted from raiding if it enters into a client relationship with the Sicilian court, perhaps paying it taxation in kind from the agricultural lands the *Life* discusses throughout, Ch. 71.

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PART 2

Transmitting Traditions

∵

'This Shocking Lobster': Understanding the Fantastic Creatures of the Armenian *Alexander Romance*

Alex MacFarlane

The *Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes[1] is one of the most widely transmitted and circulated texts in literary history. In many traditions, this entailed not only translation from a Greek original or an intermediary in another language, but also the alteration of the translated text whether by way of abbreviation, elaboration, emendation, at times the creation of entirely new material. This is the case in the Armenian *Alexander Romance* tradition, in which the text – translated from Greek in *c.*5th century – is accompanied from the late 13th or early 14th century onwards by original Armenian poems known as *kafas*. These, together with a cycle of illuminations, accompany the text of the *Alexander Romance* in an uncertain number of the surviving manuscripts.[2] They are also copied separately from the narrative in collections of poetry and hymns (*tałaran*) and miscellanies (*žołovacu*) in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries – indicative of their productive life in Armenian literary culture.[3] The *kafas* provide vital insights into how Armenians read the *Alexander Romance* in the medieval period. In some cases, they provide direct interpretations

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1   The text in its many forms has been known by numerous names, very few of them *Romance*, but this has become the conventional modern term for much of the text network inaugurated by the Greek narrative in the centuries after Alexander's death.

2   Dickran Kouymjian gives the latest estimate of surviving *Alexander Romance* manuscripts as approximately 80, with 14 of those illuminated. Hasmik Simonyan collated a list of 31 manuscripts that are held in the Mesrop Maštocʿ Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (Matenadaran) in Yerevan and contain *Alexander Romance* material, whether the narrative without *kafas*, the narrative with *kafas*, or *kafas* copied separately. There is, sadly, no comprehensive published list of all the known Armenian *Alexander Romance* manuscripts worldwide and their contents. See Hasmik Simonyan, *Hay mijnadaryan kafaner* [Medieval Armenian Kafas] (Erevan, 1975), pp. 41–134; Dickran Kouymjian, "Illustrations of the Armenian *Alexander Romance* and Motifs from Christian Iconography," in *Armenian, Hittite, and Indo-European Studies: A Commemoration Volume for Jos J.S. Weitenberg* eds. Uwe Bläsing, Jasmine Dum-Tragut and Theo Maarten van Lint (Leuven, forthcoming).

3   Eight of these manuscripts are held in the Matenadaran in Yerevan: M519, M723, M3668, M5623, M7709, M7726, M8482, M8689. I am currently working on research into the *kafas* collected in these eight manuscripts.

of events in the narrative. Of interest to this study are the *kafas* appended to the parts of the *Alexander Romance* where Alexander and his army journey to far-off places at the edges of or beyond the known world and encounter men and monstrous creatures whose existence is difficult to believe. Using a Christian view of the world, with references to Scripture, to Christianised stories of animals in the Armenian *Physiologus* and fables, and to cosmological texts, the authors of the *kafas* attempt to understand these men and creatures as part of Creation.[4] In this way, the initial act of transmission – the translation of the *Alexander Romance* from Greek to Armenian – is seen to be only the beginning of a long process of creation that uses the transmitted text as the basis of a rich tradition in the Armenian language. The view of this short study is not the multiple worlds through which the multilingual *Alexander Romance* circulated, but a closer look at the complexity of a local level.

1   Translation

In the centuries following the deeds and death of Alexander III of Macedon, a network of stories about his life developed. Its earliest written attestation is a 1st century BC Greek papyrus (Berlin papyrus 13044) that contains a fragment of Alexander's dialogue with the gymnosophists (naked philosophers) of India.[5] By the 3rd century AD at the latest, these stories had cohered into a text represented by the α recension of what is now widely called the *Alexander Romance*. Its narrative follows roughly – if in places non-chronologically – the more conventional, and considered historical, narrative of Alexander's invasion of the Achaemenid Empire as survives in the works of Arrian, Diodorus Siculus, Quintus Curtius Rufus and Plutarch, with the addition of purely fictional episodes. These include the birth story that makes Alexander the son of Nectanebo II, final pharaoh of Egypt before the Achaemenid reconquest, rather than Philip II of Macedon, and a number of experiences at the edges of the world, ranging from Alexander's encounter with the naked philosophers in real but unfamiliar India to assaults by and on impossible creatures in places that could not exist. The textual narrative continued to develop

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4   The association between the *Alexander Romance* and animal-texts like the *Physiologus,* fables and associated texts such as the *Life of Aesop* is not unique to the Armenian tradition. It is attested in Greek and Slavonic contexts, too. See Ida Toth, "The Byzantine Book of *Syntipas the Philosopher*," in *Fictional Storytelling in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond*, eds. Carolina Cupane and Bettina Krönung (Leiden, 2016), p. 390, with references.

5   Richard Stoneman, *Legends of Alexander the Great* (1994; repr. London, 2012), pp. x–xi, 77–83.

in later recensions, in Greek and other languages, through the late antique and Byzantine period and beyond, with the spread of the *Alexander Romance* extending from Scotland to Malaysia to Ethiopia.[6]

At an unknown point in the early centuries of Armenian literary production following the creation of the Armenian alphabet around 400 AD by Mesrop Maštoc‘, the Greek *Alexander Romance* was translated into Armenian. This is noteworthy for taking place at a time when many translations and original compositions belonged to the creation of a Christian narrative and heritage for Armenians. The translation's date has traditionally been ascribed to the 5th century partially on the basis of its past attribution to the historian Movsēs Xorenac‘i – but with his revised (though not universally accepted) dating to as late as the 8th century, this naturally raises questions about the exact dating of the Armenian *Alexander Romance*.[7] The second reason for its early dating is its 'pre-Hellenising' style of translation, typically seen in texts translated soon after the Armenian alphabet's development, which continues to support the *c.*5th century translation of the *Alexander Romance*.[8] Within a few centuries, direct evidence of its existence in Armenian survives through its usage by other authors.[9] The Armenian *Alexander Romance* is considered to be a translation of the earliest recension of the Greek – the α recension – though it incorporates episodes not found in the Greek until later recensions. This instability in the delineations of the recensions is valuable: it highlights the danger of centring the Greek tradition rather than seeing the literary legends of Alexander as a far wider network of on-going developments, translations, regional differences and independent regional compositions (all reflecting only the scribal component of an oral network) to which the Greek literary tradition belongs but is only a part. Indeed, in a recent article, Giusto Traina has recommended that the Armenian *Alexander Romance* be considered a recension of

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6 Richard Stoneman, "Primary Sources from the Classical and Early Medieval Periods," in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Z. David Zumiyya (Leiden, 2011), pp. 1–20; Ulrich Moennig, "Alexander the Great in Ancient, Byzantine and Modern Greek Tradition," in *Fictional Storytelling in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond*, eds. Carolina Cupane and Bettina Krönung (Leiden, 2016), pp. 159–189. For the global reach of the *Alexander Romance*, a useful introduction can be found in Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend* (New Haven, CT, 2008).

7 For the late dating of Xorenac‘i, see the introduction to Robert W. Thomson, *Moses Khorenats‘i History of the Armenians: Translation and Commentary on the Literary Sources* (1978; repr. Ann Arbor, MI, 2006).

8 Gohar Muradyan, *Grecisms in Ancient Armenian* (Leuven, 2012), pp. 16–24, 230–247.

9 Aram Topchyan, "The Alexander Romance in Medieval Armenian Historiography," in *L'historiographie médiévale d'Alexandre le Grand,* ed. C. Gaullier-Bougassas (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 85–102.

its own, rather than merely a translation of the Greek α recension.[10] Alternatively, the attempt to create a tidy structure of literary development through neat recensions might be considered of limited efficacy.

The earliest surviving manuscripts of the Armenian *Alexander Romance* post-date its translation by nearly a thousand years (a typical situation with Armenian manuscripts). Of the 80-plus manuscripts that are known to survive, only two are from the late 13th or early 14th century. The rest date to the 16th century and later. The two earlier manuscripts are quite different: one, M10151[11] (held in the Matenadaran in Yerevan, Armenia) contains the text without illuminations or *kafas*, while the other, V424[12] (held at the monastery of the Mxit'arist Brotherhood at San Lazzaro degli Armeni), is a lavishly illuminated manuscript with the addition of *kafas* composed by the 13th century poet Xač'atur Keč'aṙec'i, who also appended a comparison of Alexander to Christ. In the colophon, Xač'atur Keč'aṙec'i talks of amending the text of the *Alexander Romance*, which has led to the question of recensions within the Armenian *Alexander Romance* tradition, with M10151 posited by Hasmik Simonyan as a representative of an earlier, unadulterated recension and V424 among the first of a medieval recension. The current consensus is that, while there have been redactions within the Armenian *Alexander Romance* tradition, Xač'atur Keč'aṙec'i did not make drastic changes to the lost original translation.[13]

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10   Giusto Traina, "Some Observations on the Armenian Pseudo-Callisthenes," in *Greek Texts and Armenian Traditions: An Interdisciplinary Approach* eds. Francesca Gazzano, Lara Pagani and Giusto Traina (Berlin, 2016), pp. 23–30.

11   This manuscript is edited as the B text in Hasmik Simonyan, *Patmut'iwn Aɫek'sandri Makedonac'woc': Haykakan xmbagrut'iwnner* [History of Alexander of Macedon: Armenian Edition] (Erevan, 1989).

12   A superb facsimile of this manuscript is available, with Italian translation of both narrative and *kafas* as extant in this particular manuscript, which has some partially and completely damaged folios: Giusto Traina, Carlo Franco, Dickran Kouymjian and Cecilia Veronese Arslan, *La storia di Alessandro il Macedone: Codice armeno miniato del XIV secolo (Venezia, San Lazzaro, 424)* (Padova, 2003). This manuscript also forms the primary basis for the English translation of the Armenian *Alexander Romance*, which omits the *kafas*: Albert Mugrdich Wolohojian, *The Romance of Alexander the Great by Pseudo-Callisthenes* (New York, 1969).

13   S. Peter Cowe, "Aspects of the Translation and Redaction Process of the Alexander Romance in Armenian," in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Armenian Linguistics*, ed. Dora Sakayan (Delmar, NY, 1996), pp. 245–260; Sara Mancini Lombardi and Gabriella Uluhogian, "Due redazioni per il *Romanzo di Alessandro* armeno: tessere di un mosaico perduto?" in: *La diffusione dell'eredità classica nell'età tardoantica e medievale: Il 'Romanzo di Alessandro' e altri scritti*, eds. Rosa Bianca Finazzi and Alfredo Valvo (Alessandria, 1998), pp. 157–174.

The most important contribution made by Xačʻatur Kečʻařecʻi is the composition of *kafas* – to which, in the 16th century, Grigoris Ałtʻamarcʻi, Zakʻaria Gnunecʻi and others added their own. It is to this poetic post-translation process that this study now turns.

2   Creation

Where they accompany the Armenian *Alexander Romance*, the *kafas* appear throughout the entire narrative, primarily as part of the main body of text, often in pairs, sometimes alone, and – in examples such as V424 – typically alongside an illumination. In the three examples I have so far seen, they are in a different colour ink: red or green, while the *Alexander Romance* is written in black.[14] This gives them a bold presence on the page: they stand out, whether encased in a red box alongside the illumination, without a red box, or even in the few cases where they appear in the physical margins of the manuscript. In meter, they take two poetic forms: that of the *hayren* – stanzas of two, four or more lines, with a syllable pattern of 2 + 3 + 2 / 3 + 2 + 3, rhyming at the end of the line[15] – and that of the *kafa* – in lines of fifteen or sixteen syllables, with the syllable pattern of 2 + 5 or 3 + 5 per half-line, with a monorhyme that typically falls on every half-line.[16] In the *Romance*, both forms are collectively referred to as *kafas*, and the issue of lines and half-lines is mentioned for understanding of syllable and rhyme: in every manuscript I have examined so far, they are written in continuous lines, as if prose. These monorhymed poetic forms have their roots in Arabic poetry – *kafa* is from the Arabic *qafiya* – but, by the time of Xačʻatur Kečʻařecʻi, they had been integrated into local tradition, as the name *hayren* indicates, and put to local purposes that encompassed subjects such as lay love and scholarly explication of Alexander's life.[17] Their language ranges

14   These are: (1) V424, seen in facsimile: Traina et al., *La storia di Alessandro il Macedone,* (2) MCR3, a 16th century manuscript copied by Bishop Zakʻaria (likely Zakʻaria Gnunecʻi), digitised at http://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/Manchester~91~1~416825 ~147912 [accessed May 2017], (3) a 17th century manuscript in the museum of the Matenadaran in April 2016, with no manuscript number given, open to a double-page spread of an illumination above black and red text.

15   Srbouhi Hairapetian, *A History of Armenian Literature from Ancient Times to the Nineteenth Century* (Delmar, NY, 1995), p. 472.

16   James R. Russell, "The Tale of the Bronze City in Armenian," in *Medieval Armenian Culture*, eds. Thomas J. Samuelian and Michael E. Stone (Chico, CA, 1983), pp. 250–261.

17   S. Peter Cowe, "The Politics of Poetics: Islamic Influence on Armenian Verse," in *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*, eds. J.J. van Ginkel, H.L. Murre-van den Berg and Theo M. van Lint (Leuven, 2005), pp. 379–403. It

from Classical Armenian to Middle Armenian: overall, a far more colloquial language that is contemporary to their periods of composition, at a contrast to the usually very consistent Classical Armenian of the *Alexander Romance* narrative.

The *kafas* perform multiple functions in the *Alexander Romance*: in relation to illuminations, they provide a caption; in relation to the main narrative, they repeat information already given, they elaborate on it to add new information, they comment upon the actions of Alexander – at times directly addressing him – in a moralising tone.[18] This is a task to which Armenian authors put *kafas* in another translated tale of non-Christian origin, the *Tale of the City of Bronze*, translated from Arabic at the beginning of the 11th century and translated again from Arabic in the 13th century, with later amendments to (most likely) the latter translation made in the 16th century by Grigoris Ałt'amarc'i, who also wrote *kafas* for the *Alexander Romance*. From an early stage, the Armenian *Tale of the City of Bronze* included *kafas*, translating poetic inscriptions found by the protagonist in the original Arabic tale – and this may, in fact, be the beginning of *kafas* in Armenian literature – with more composed by Grigoris Ałt'amarc'i, and they "are usually lamenting and didactic in character."[19] In the *Alexander Romance*, where they accompany the text's description of Alexander and his army conquering the remote parts of the world, they perform an explanatory role. This is primarily in the two epistolary sections of the narrative: Alexander's Letter to Olympias about his journey into the fantastical place beyond Armenia and the Medean desert, where "there are wild men and evil beasts",[20] and Alexander's Letter to Aristotle about the sights of India. In the text, the creatures encountered in both letters are incomprehensible: Alexander and his army are travellers through an episodic landscape of wondrous and fearsome

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is unclear when the *hayren* meter appeared in relation to the incorporation of the Arabic monorhyme. The emergence of love *hayrens* in Armenian is considered in depth, with a fruitful comparison in content and context to the Minnesang of the Middle High Germany period, in Hasmik Melkonyan, *Hayren-Dichtung und Minnesang: Ein Struktureller und Motivgeschichtlicher Vergleich* (Göttingen, 2014).

18   Christina Maranci, "Word and Image in the Armenian Alexander Romance," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 13 (2003–2004), 19–28.

19   Russell, "The Tale of the Bronze City in Armenian". These are untranslated as a whole into any Western European language, though an example is translated in S. Peter Cowe, "Medieval Armenian Literary and Cultural Trends (Twelfth-Seventeenth Centuries)," in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times,* 2 vols., ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Los Angeles, CA, 1997), 1:319. It reads: "Alas for you, fair city, that there is no one alive in you. All have turned to dust: there is no owner in these well-stocked stores. Would that we had never seen such bewildering things. Woe on us too if we should become like them – pitiable and fit for tears."

20   Simonyan, *Patmut'iwn Ałek'sandri Makedonac'woc'*, p. 252. All translations from the Armenian *Alexander Romance* and *kafas* are my own.

beings. Their only agency is to progress. Contemplating the nature of Creation, which has led to the existence of such beings, the writers of the *kafas* attempt to interpret events through their knowledge of Scripture – in doing so, the creatures are understood.

A *kafa* in the Letter to Olympias, where Alexander and his army encounter headless men, makes this clear. The narrative reads: "Setting off from there, we came to a place where the men were headless. They had no head at all, but they had the eyes and mouth in their chests, and they spoke in their own human language, and were hairy and skin-clothed fish-eaters."[21] Such men are difficult to comprehend as part of the real world, as the *kafas* make clear: the *kafas* ask questions, they call the men "miracles" and describe Alexander's astonishment and wonder.

> Blessed creational offspring,
> How many races of living creatures exist?
> No one was born without a head,
> Except for those composed like this.
> These are admirable miracles,
> How did they come into being?
> Trees, forests and plants,
> Irrational and rational living creatures.
>
> To the extent He has created man
> from earth, in this way it is not seen,
> Either conceived in the mind
> or described in writing by anyone:
> That a man who is headless,
> goes somewhere far away.
> This, which the king saw,
> he greatly marvelled at, astonished.[22]

Both of these *kafas* struggle to situate the headless men in Creation, and in doing so provide a commentary to which the audience of the *Alexander Romance* can probably relate: it is indeed difficult to imagine that such men might exist. Elsewhere in the Christian world, the existence of other 'monstrous' men such as the Cynocephali (dog-headed men) raised the question of whether they

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21   Simonyan, *Patmutʿiwn Ałekʿsandri Makedonacʿwocʿ*, p. 260.
22   Simonyan, *Patmutʿiwn Ałekʿsandri Makedonacʿwocʿ*, p. 260.

were rational beings with souls – who could thus be saved – or mere animals.[23] A dog-headed man appears in some Armenian manuscript illuminations of Pentecost, among the pagans witnessing the Holy Spirit's granting of polyglotism to the Apostles, from the 13th century – but he represents a person from an extremely remote nation, as do the 'monstrous' races such as headless men in the *Alexander Romance*, with no concern expressed for his soul.[24] He becomes associated with Saint Christopher, who, elsewhere in Armenian literature – in the Armenian *Martyrdom of Christopher* – is dog-headed (*Šanaglux*).[25] The 13th century, when Xačʻatur Kečʻaṙecʻi wrote the first *kafas*, saw the Mongol invasion of the Armenian highlands and an expansion of Armenian knowledge (though not all factual) of eastern Asia. Kirakos Gandzakecʻi, a historian of that century, wrote of a land to the east of Łatayikʻ [China] where "men have the forms of dogs".[26] The 12th-century Michael the Syrian, whose work was translated into Armenian by Vardan Arewelcʻi and Išox in Cilician Armenia in the mid-13th century, wrote in a sermon *On Priesthood* that the Apostle Andrew preached in "the land of dog-headed people" (*erkirn Šanaglxacʻ*).[27] The *kafas* about the headless men belong to this narrative geography in which the unfamiliar peoples at the extremities of the known world are represented by physical extremes. No concern for the soul (or lack thereof) of the headless men encountered by Alexander is preserved in the *kafas* – what they demonstrate is

23   Scott G. Bruce, "Hagiography as Monstrous Ethnography: A Note on Ratramnus of Corbie's Letter Concerning the Conversion of the Cynocephali," in *Insignis Sophiae Arcator: Medieval Latin Studies in Honour of Michael Herren on his 65th Birthday*, eds. Gernot R. Wieland, Carin Ruff and Ross G. Arthur (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 45–56. The literature on the 'monstrous races' is extensive. The following two books provide good overviews: David Gordon White, *Myths of the Dog-Man* (Chicago, 1991); John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge, MA, 1981).

24   Dickran Kouymjian, "The Problem of the Zoomorphic Figure in the Iconography of Armenian Pentecost: A Preliminary Report," in *Atti del Primo Simposio Internazionale di Arte Armena (Bergamo, 28–30 giugno 1975)*, eds. Giulio Ieni and Levon B. Zekiyan (Venice, 1978), pp. 403–407; Vrej Nersessian, *A Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the British Library Acquired Since the Year 1913 and of Collections in Other Libraries in the United Kingdom* (London, 2012), 1:38–39.

25   Łevont Alishan, *Varkʻ ew vkayabanutʻiwnkʻ srbocʻ* [Lives and Martyrdoms of the Saints] (Venice, 1874), pp. 527–533.

26   Kirakos Gandzakecʻi, *History of the Armenians* 58, ed. K.A. Melikʻ-Ohanjanyan (Erevan, 1961), p. 371; English translation in Robert Bedrosian, *Kirakos Gandzaketsʻiʻs History of the Armenians* (Long Branch, NJ, 1975).

27   Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle,* Version II, ed. Tigran Sawalaneancʻ (Jerusalem, 1871), addendum with separate pagination, p. 18; Kouymjian, "The Problem of the Zoomorphic Figure," p. 405. On the structure of the Jerusalem editions, see Andrea Schmidt, "The Armenian Versions I and II of Michael the Syrian," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 16(1) (2013), 93–128.

a struggle to fully understand these remote "creational offspring" who are close to human, but not quite human enough.

Earlier in the Letter to Olympias, Alexander and his army meet with giant men who are called "planted ones" and possess hands and fingers like saws.

> These immense men, planted ones,
> With hands like saws,
> Standing at a height of twenty-four
> Times my own height,
> Engaged with the trustworthy soldiers.
> The beaten ones were killed by blows:
> Turning them to flight,
> Killing with an intense voice.
>
> O my wonder-working God,
> creator of all peoples!
> O your marvellous works
> which groups of spectators recount!
> The natural sheep
> we did not see in India.
> But these planted men
> we did not see in any fables.[28]

The *kafa*-metered poem describes the appearance of the planted ones and the fight with them, but the *hayren*-metered poem elaborates on their marvellous nature: the author addresses God, exclaiming about His creations, and contrasts the absence of "natural sheep" in Indian lands[29] to the absence of planted

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28   Simonyan, *Patmut'iwn Ałek'sandri Makedonac'woc'*, p. 253.

29   Alexander does not describe entering India in the Letter to Olympias. Instead, this occurs later in the narrative and is partially covered by the Letter to Aristotle. The author of the *kafa* is, perhaps, referring to later events in India, or is confused between the two different excursions to the edges of the world. Alternatively, this indicates the composition of the *kafa* separately from the narrative, with India mentioned in the *kafa* because the region is associated with wonders encountered by Alexander. This association is seen in the 14th-century history *The Flower of the Histories of the East* written by Het'um the Historian (Hayton of Corycus), a Cilician Armenian statesman, originally dictated in Old French and swiftly translated to Latin in 1307 by his secretary Nicholas Falcon. It did not appear in Armenian until the 1842 translation of Mxit'arist father Mkrtič' Awgerean. Het'um opens the text with a series of ethnographic descriptions of nations, many of them far from Armenia or Europe. The *c.*1520 English translation by Richard Pynson includes, on India: "Towarde the north parte by the long and great desert of Inde, where Kynge Alexandre founde so great dyuersite of serpentes and of beestes as his hystorie recounteth…"

men in fables. This neatly expresses the unexpected experience of being in this place: not only are familiar animals like sheep absent, but neither had fables (which include some unusual animals and behaviours) prepared them for these creatures. Yet they are understood as among God's creations, and God is praised. This recurs later in the Letter to Olympias, in a *kafa* that expresses astonishment at the creatures of the river.

> O river! How many
> evil, dire animals are in you!
> *Višaps*, strong strikers,
> black stones of the same vigorous quality;
> Fish, which are not cooked by fire,
> Birds, which create crackling fire.
> I say glory to that creator
> who inhabits that one place.[30]

The description of the monstrous creatures as "evil" is developed in other *kafas* with specific reference to Christian thought and even Scripture. This is seen in an episode where, in Alexander's Letter to Aristotle, the army's camp is attacked in the night by an array of wild creatures, including night-foxes of varying sizes:

> The lord says of the foxes: dens,
> and of the birds of the heavens: nests.
> The fox, similar to Satan,
> goes around all through the night –
> at the burning belt
> they hold back the soul of man.
> Having seen it, Alexander said:
> "Let us pray to get rid of the animal!"
>
> Measuring eight cubits or five:
> The foxes, leaping over,
> Appearing in heaps of sand,
> Finding a way against the army –
> With a three-branched tongue,
> With dog-like tails trying to woo,
> With teeth tearing –
> Coming boldly to the soldiers.[31]

Glenn Burger, *Hetoum, A Lytell Cronycle: Richard Pynson's Translation (c.1520) of La Fleur des histoires de la terre d'Orient (c.1307)* (Toronto, 1988), p. 11.

30   Simonyan, *Patmutʻiwn Ałekʻsandri Makedonacʻwocʻ*, p. 258.

31   Simonyan, *Patmutʻiwn Ałekʻsandri Makedonacʻwocʻ*, p. 290.

As earlier, the *kafa*-metered poem simply describes the attack: the sizes of the foxes, their disturbing features and their violence. The *hayren*-metered poem considers the nature of the foxes. With reference to Matthew 8:20 – "Jesus replied, 'Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.'" – and comparing the foxes to Satan, threatening man's soul, the terrifying foxes are shown to be part of Creation.

There is precedent in Armenian writing for providing certain animals with Christian associations. One strand of this stems from the four living creatures that carry the throne-chariot in the vision of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1 and 10), which was developed in commentary by Irenaeus, Evagrius of Pontus and Ephrem the Syrian – all translated into Armenian – and, in the 8th century, by the Armenian writer Step'anos Siwnec'i in his *Commentary on Ezekiel*. Additionally, in the *Heavenly Hierarchy* attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, translated into Armenian in the 8th century by the same Step'anos, the "heavenly intelligences" are "sacredly symbolised in the form of wild beasts".[32] No doubt, these texts and others primed Armenian audiences to understand certain concepts through the metaphorical application of animals. A more direct connection, in this case, is the depiction of the fox in the *Physiologus*. This early Christian Greek text was translated into Armenian in the 5th century and enjoyed great popularity: Gohar Muradyan's study of the Armenian *Physiologus* is based on 42 manuscripts and identifies five recensions or sub-recensions.[33] The contents comprise a variable number of short expositions about the natures of various real and mythical animals, presenting their good or bad qualities as Christian allegories. Of the fox, the *Physiologus* says that "this animal is in all respects insidious and perfidious": it tricks birds into thinking it is dead so that they will come close and attempt to eat it, in order that it can eat the birds in turn. Recall the *kafa* line "With dog-like tails trying to woo": a different trick of the foxes, wagging their tails like friendly dogs, but similarly deceiving. The *Physiologus* goes on to say that "Likewise the devil is small in all respects, and his intrigues are great and the tricks are deceptive." There are subsequently four references in the *Physiologus* to foxes in the Scriptures, one of which is the same from Matthew, abbreviated to just "Foxes have holes".[34]

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32   Robert W. Thomson, *The Armenian Version of the Works Attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite*, 2 vols. (Leuven, 1987), 1:51, 2:36.

33   Gohar Muradyan, *Physiologus: The Greek and Armenian Versions with a Study of Translation Technique* (Leuven, 2005).

34   Muradyan, *Physiologus*, p. 152. The full passage reads: "Concerning the Fox. Physiologus says that this animal is in all respects insidious and perfidious. When it gets hungry and does not find any prey to hunt and to eat, it goes and finds a muddy place or wherever there is chaff, and rolls over the ashes and falls on its back in a field and does not look upwards and holds its breath and swells thoroughly. And the birds consider it dead and come down to eat it. And so it deceitfully seizes and disembowels the birds and kills cruelly and eats. Likewise the devil is small in all respects, and his intrigues are great and

This passage from Matthew is referenced elsewhere in Armenian literature: in the *History of the House of the Arcrunik'* by T'ovma Arcruni, written in the 10th century, the king of the Ałuank (Caucasian Albanians) is said to respond to the 9th century encroachments of Bugha al-Kabir with a derogatory letter that includes the following: "you are like the stag without horns, and we the eagles [swooping down] on you, blinding your eyes, to throw you as carrion to my young and the foxes who live in dens."[35] Most of this passage draws on Proverbs 30:17 – "The eye that mocks a father, that scorns an aged mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures." – but the den-dwelling foxes are an addition from Matthew 8:20. This provides evidence for widespread Armenian familiarity with this Biblical description of the fox. Another – and quite separate – use of the fox with a negative connotation in Armenian literature is found in the 5th century *Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk'* [Epic Histories]. The Persian king Šapuh has his captured enemy the Armenian *sparapet* Vasak Mamikonean brought before him and calls him a fox – to which Vasak retorts that Šapuh thought him a lion, threatening the Persians, until he saw that Vasak is small in stature. Manolis Papoutsakis, tracing the development of this motif comparing the paltry fox to the lion in Syriac literature, suggests that it was taken up by the anonymous author of the *Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk'*.[36]

In all likelihood, the author of the fox *kafa* expected much of the audience to recognise the scriptural reference, as the line makes little sense without knowing it: thus, the *kafa* situates the giant foxes encountered by Alexander and his army in Creation in a way that its audience probably understood.

More creatures in the *kafas* accompanying the Letter to Aristotle are understood through comparison to Satan: the *bṙnažani* (in the Greek and Latin versions of the letter, this is the *odontotyrannos*: 'tooth-tyrant', described just before the *kafas* in the Armenian text as "greater than any elephant"), which attacks the camp before the foxes and causes a loss of blood and life.

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the tricks are deceptive. And he who wants to eat of his flesh, dies. His flesh is fornications and love of money, hatred, arrogance, envy and all other vices. It likens even Herod to a fox (Luke 13:32); and the scribe heard from the Saviour: 'Foxes have holes' (Matthew 8:20), and in 'Song of Songs': 'Catch us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vine-yards' (Song 2:15), and David: 'they shall be portion for foxes' (Psalms 63:10). Hence he spoke well about the fox."

35 T'ovma Arcruni, *History of the House of the Arcrunik'* 3.10, ed. K. Patkanov, *T'ovmayi Vardapeti Artsrunwoy Patmut'iwn Tann Artsruneats'* (1887; repr. Delmar, NY, 1991), p. 179; English translation in Robert W. Thomson, *Thomas Artsruni: History of the House of the Artsrunik'* (Detroit, 1985), p. 244.

36 Manolis Papoutsakis, "The Making of a Syriac Fable: from Ephrem to Romanos," *Le Muséon* 120(1–2) (2007), 29–75.

This *bṙnažani* creature,
it was a model of Satan.
Arriving suddenly,
it scattered much blood.
Shudders overcame the multitude.
The entire army was cut.
Striking with arrows, with swords,
slaughtering, they cast it to the earth.

We haven't seen other living creatures
with the name *bṙnažani*.
So evil and fantastical of aspect
and by itself very monstrous.
Fighter and tearer,
it was a model of Satan.[37]
It wounded many:
twenty-six people died.[38]

So too the bats with human teeth, which follow not long after the foxes (though they are not so Satanic that the army cannot hunt and eat them).

These bats the size of pigeons,
With evil teeth like men's,
They became to us hunted food,
They were easily caught.
But at the hour of night for sleeping,
They passed by hidden to some other place,
They disappeared from the light of the eyes,
And not appearing, [they were] invisible.

These birds, which you see as the size of pigeons,
They are hurtful rats, with chins like a fox's.
The wings have hide like a bat's,
And they are hurtful in the measure of Satan.
By day they do not appear the size of other animals,
By night they fight as evil enemies.[39]

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37   This half-line is identical to the second half-line of the first *kafa*.
38   Simonyan, *Patmutʻiwn Ałekʻsandri Makedonacʻwocʻ*, pp. 288–289.
39   Simonyan, *Patmutʻiwn Ałekʻsandri Makedonacʻwocʻ*, pp. 290–291.

This interpretation is straightforward: each creature, "by itself very monstrous" as the *bṙnažani* is described in one *kafa*, is "a model of Satan" (the *bṙnažani*) or "hurtful in the measure of Satan" (the bats with human teeth). The evil aspects of Satan are an immediately accessible point of reference to the Christian Armenian audience of the *kafas*. These terrifying and destructive creatures encountered by Alexander and his army are readily understandable as belonging to the evil within the Christian universe. Another species of monstrous animal in the *Alexander Romance* is similarly described – giant lobsters, "a model of the idle-talker" – but the lobsters are given an interpretation of specific interest to an Armenian audience, which deserves special examination.

In Alexander's Letter to Olympias, there are giant lobsters, but they are not only models of Satan. They are, remarkably, a model for the Armenian people. After encountering trees that grow and shrink each day and yield a sap like Persian perfume, stones that turn any person who touches them black, *višaps*, fish that can only be boiled in cold water, fire birds, five-footed and six-footed beasts, six-eyed beasts, and headless men, Alexander and his army see "very great lobsters, like boats".[40] No further description of the lobsters is provided in this moment, but Hasmik Simonyan's edition collects three *kafas* that describe the lobsters here. One of these will be considered at length below. In the narrative, Alexander's men implore him to return, but he insists on going on "to see the end of the earth". The lobsters are the last animals they see, as what follows is "a wilderness route … we did not see anything, no birds and no wild beasts, no reptiles and no fowls, but only heaven and earth. We saw no sun, but went through dark air for ten days." They then reach an island, where they hear but cannot see people speaking Greek. Here, "a lobster came up and plucked fifty-four soldiers and pulled them to the water."[41] Hasmik Simonyan's edition has one further *kafa* here, which heightens the emotional impact of the scene by addressing Alexander and describing the lobster as "this creature of evil". Lobsters do (re)appear later in the Letter to Aristotle, but without a *kafa*: "Many lobsters leapt up from the lake and immeasurable was their multitude. They destroyed all the tents and weapon-carriers."[42]

The section of V424 where the lobsters might appear is no longer extant, so it is uncertain whether it contained any lobster *kafas*. A 16th century manuscript held in Manchester's John Rylands Library (MCR3) – which follows the same illumination cycle as V424 with many of the same *kafas* – contains two lobster *kafas*. These are found above and below an illumination (that more closely resembles a crab, but is labelled *xec'getin*) on leaf 214, with another two

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40   Simonyan, *Patmut'iwn Ałek'sandri Makedonac'woc'*, p. 261.

41   Simonyan, *Patmut'iwn Ałek'sandri Makedonac'woc'*, pp. 261–262.

42   Simonyan, *Patmut'iwn Ałek'sandri Makedonac'woc'*, p. 290.

FIGURE 5.1   The shocking lobster encountered by Alexander and his army, with a *kafa* above
(in green) and below (in red) the image. MCR3, leaf 214.
(© JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY, MANCHESTER)

FIGURE 5.2   A lobster sinking one of Alexander's boats, with a *kafa* above (in green) and below
(in red) the image. MCR3, leaf 215
(© JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY, MANCHESTER)

kafas above and below an illumination of a clawed creature upending a boat (Figs 5.1–5.2). This suggests, though does not of course confirm, that at least some of the lobster *kafas* are from the pen of Xačʻatur Kečʻařecʻi. The one of particular interest reads:

> This shocking lobster,
> Which was an exemplar for the Armenian people:
> Revealer of the customs of the inhabitants,
> It personifies the nation in itself.
> But this is far greater,
> This itself is a model of the idle-talker[43]
> Through which the evil one found entry
> And made Adam most sorrowful.[44]

The two *kafas* following it describe the lobster's way of living and its hideous nature, and mention a concern for one born in the lobster's time, while the fourth *kafa* remarks on the evil of the creature for drowning Alexander's soldiers. It is not stated why the Armenians ought to see their example in this shocking lobster, though the implication of erring would indicate unspecified sins. There is no lobster in the *Physiologus*.

Potential examples for the use of lobsters in the Armenian literary tradition can be found in fables. These are ascribed to two authors active from the 12th to 13th centuries, Vardan Aygekcʻi as well as Mxitar Goš (1120–1213), who worked in the mode of Aesop's fables – translated into Armenian, but subsequently subsumed by their own fables – and the *Physiologus*. Vardan Aygekcʻi in particular developed the genre of fables in Armenian with a Christian moral, at times explicated after the story of the fable. He is said to have used these fables to embellish his sermons, making his ideas more accessible to his congregation – indicative of a proximity of animal stories and Christian moralising in Armenian religious contexts.[45] Many of the fables attributed to Vardan Aygekcʻi were collected in the *Aghvesagirkʻ* [Book of the Fox], so named for the frequency of

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43 As it appears in MCR3, the *kafa* ends here, lacking the final two lines. Hasmik Simonyan drew on manuscripts with the longer version for her edition. This survival of multiple variants of the same *kafa* is not uncommon.

44 Simonyan, *Patmutʻiwn Ałekʻsandri Makedonacʻwocʻ*, p. 261.

45 Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare, "Review of The Fables of Wardan, Materials for a History of Medieval Armenian Literature. By N. Marr, Professor of Armenian in the University of Petersburg. (Sborniki Pritch Vardana…) Sanktpeterburg. Tipografia Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk. 3 vols. 1895, 1899," *Folk-Lore: A Quarterly Review* 10 (1899), 462–475; Agop J. Hacikyan, Gabriel Basmajian, Edward S. Franchuk and Nourhan Ouzounian, *The Heritage*

the fox's appearance in Armenian fables, but others – attributed to other writers – were copied and printed elsewhere, sometimes alongside the *Physiologus*. The ready association of Alexander with the genre of fables in Armenian is apparent not only by the reference to fables in the *kafa* about the planted men, but by his appearance in some of them.

The role of lobsters in Armenian fables is un-fixed. I have found three in N. Marr's exhaustive compendium *Sborniki pritch Vardana* [Collection of the Fables of Vardan], for now the best collection, and in each the lobster assumes a different character.[46] In the first, 'The Fox and the Lobster', the fox suggests to the lobster that they race to the threshing floor, with the winner taking the wheat – an obvious ploy for the fox to win – but the lobster pleads to be allowed to hold onto the fox with its pincers, and by this ruse beats the fox to the wheat. The lesson, expressed at the end, is that harm comes to the cunning while the weak will overcome.[47] The fox is familiar as trickster, recognisable from the *Physiologus* (and the *kafas*), as well as folklore traditions circulating among numerous cultures, while the lobster – although not the usual candidate for a role in threshing wheat – takes a stereotyped place in this fable as a weaker animal that turns the tables on a stronger, craftier or more predatory animal to succeed. There is no indication of its role in the *kafas*.

In the second tale, 'The Lobster and the Young Animals', the lobster advises the young animals to walk along a certain way, while it takes an erroneous route – but, seeing it, the young animals follow the lobster, earning the chastisement of the mother animal. The moral is directed at those in a position of guidance: those you advise will do as you do, not as you say, and so you must act accordingly. The lobster has certainly erred, but there is no suggestion that its actions were malicious.[48] There is no internal evidence for the choice of the lobster in this fable.

In the third tale, 'The Turtles and Lobsters and the Eagle' (alternatively 'The Turtles and the Lobsters'), the non-winged creatures demand that the eagle help them fly. The eagle, perceiving their arrogance, carries them to the highest rock – but then leads the other birds to fly away, and attempting to leap after

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          of Armenian Literature, Volume II: From the Sixth to the Eighteenth Century (Detroit, 2002),
          pp. 479–480.

46   A new, critical edition of the *Aghvesagirkʻ* is currently in preparation by Ani
          Shahnazaryan.

47   N. Marr, *Sborniki pritch Vardana* [Collection of the Fables of Vardan], 3 vols. (St Peters-
          burg, 1895–1899), 2:36–37; Jean Saint-Martin, *Choix de Fables de Vartan en Arménien et en
          Français* (Paris, 1825), pp. 14–17. The two versions collected by Marr and Saint-Martin have
          some word-level differences, but in their details tell the same story. All translations from
          the fables are my own.

48   Marr, *Sborniki pritch Vardana,* 2:287.

them, the turtles and lobsters fall to the bottom of a deep valley, where they are shattered on a pile of stones and become food for the birds.[49] Perhaps this provides some insight into the meaning of the lobster *kafa.* One variant of the fable is introduced with an explanation: "Arrogantly, the multitude wanted to do some deed, which was beyond its power. They lacked the power to accomplish it to completion, and from the burden of the work they were destroyed. The race of the tortoises and lobsters also acted similarly…"[50] The other provides its explanation at the end: anyone who is arrogant and attempts to take on work beyond his or her power "dies like the tortoises", falling to hell at the day of judgement, while "the just and the repentant sinners will ascend to encounter the Lord Christ and enter the paternal nuptial couch."[51] Here, then, is an additional example in Armenian tradition of sinful lobsters. While this is not the lobster's sole role in Armenian fables, nor is the lobster at all unique in possessing a sinful nature among the menagerie of creatures utilised by Vardan Aygekc'i and Mxitar Goš in creating their tales, this fable situates the *kafa* in the animal-world created by the Armenian *Physiologus* and fables. The *kafa* is not a complete outlier.

However, the *kafa* goes further than the fable's position on the actions of the lobsters: it directly addresses the Armenian people (*haykazin*). The lobster is a "revealer of the customs of the inhabitants, it personifies the nation in itself." As implicit as the fables' morals are, this *kafa* demands that its audience see themselves in the animal described. Why the lobster? Explanation for this is to be sought not in texts like the *Physiologus* or fables, but cosmology. Such texts described the breadth of the terrestrial and heavenly worlds to varying extents, assigning to each part its appropriate place in Christian Creation (or, if the text was originally non-Christian, interpreting it as doing so). In the cosmos as described in the *Anonymous Philosophical Treatise* ascribed to Zeno, signs of the zodiac are associated with different countries and body parts: "Cancer (is) of the Armenians, which are the lungs."[52] The word for 'lobster' and the sign 'Cancer' (*xec'getin*) is the same, and in iconography circulating in numerous traditions (not only Armenian) the sign is depicted variously as a crab or lobster. Indeed, it has already been mentioned that the illuminations of this

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49   Marr, *Sborniki pritch Vardana,* 2:28, 3:75–76. Marr collects two variants of this fable: one found in the *Aghvesagirk',* one copied elsewhere. The basic story is the same, but the *Aghvesagirk'* fable (2:28) contains the subsequent paragraph explaining the moral, while the other version (3:75–76) provides only a short introduction to contextualise the animals' actions within considerations of right behaviour.

50   Marr, *Sborniki pritch Vardana,* 3:75–76.

51   Marr, *Sborniki pritch Vardana,* 2:28.

52   *Anonymous Philosophical Treatise* 1.4.7, eds. M.E. Stone and M.E. Shirinian, *Pseudo-Zeno, Anonymous Philosophical Treatise* (Leiden, 2000): 57, 132.

episode of the *Alexander Romance* in MCR3 resemble a crab more than a lobster. The *Anonymous Philosophical Treatise* was composed in Greek in *c.*6th century (now lost) and translated into Armenian soon after, most likely in the 7th century. It is not unique in the broader cosmological tradition in linking regions to zodiac signs, though it is the only I have found thus far to exist in the Armenian language that links Armenia and Cancer. Although it was not widely circulated, its use in the "curriculum" of the teaching that flourished at Gladzor and Tatʻev in the late 13th and early 14th centuries ensured its survival in intellectual life.[53] It is certainly possible that a monastic scholar such as Xačʻatur Kečʻařecʻi would be familiar with this text, through the networks of circulation and transmission among monasteries that resulted in manuscripts containing the *Anonymous Philosophical Treatise* being copied in sites such as Ējmiacin and Dełdzut in the South Caucasus and Tokat (Eudokia) in Anatolia.[54]

Cosmological texts and the *Physiologus* functioned similarly: they explained features of the world. The Christian cartography they created informed how writers such as Xačʻatur Kečʻařecʻi, Grigoris Ałtʻamarcʻi and Zakaria Gnunecʻi perceived the world as described in literature such as the *Alexander Romance*. Clearly, the *Alexander Romance* confronted the authors of the *kafas* with creatures that either they had never heard of or – from an authorial remove – they were aware that an audience would have never heard of. What they attempted belongs to the same drive as the cosmologists' to divine the place of all living things.

The erring of the Armenian people indicated by the *kafa* need not be specified: references to sin function as a shorthand, which the audience of any text can be expected to understand without lengthy exegesis. If anything, its lack of specificity grants it greater power. Any transgression can be imagined or suggested as subject to pejorative – in the case of the *kafa* in the *Alexander Romance*, to lobster-based criticism. Though it is a lot to expect that audiences of the *kafa* knew the unique cosmological association between lobsters and Armenians, the allegorical role of an animal (especially one without any other strong association) as the sinner was probably readily perceptible: a strong message, coming in a poem set at a remotest reach of the world, which in other texts was near paradise.

These animal *kafas*, on subjects from giant foxes and bats with human teeth to lobsters that represent the Armenian people (and more), steer a Christian understanding of the more fabulous parts of the pagan *Alexander Romance*. The Christian audience of the Armenian *Alexander Romance* is an essential

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53   Stone and Shirinian, *Pseudo-Zeno*, p. 28.
54   Stone and Shirinian, *Pseudo-Zeno*, p. 30.

part of their place in Armenian literary culture. Citing Brian Stock, John Miles Foley discusses one model of orality and textuality in a (western European) historical monastic setting: a text was 'read' by "assigning principal interpretation to a single person." This person "mastered" the text and subsequently shaped how others understood it. The fact that it was written did not result in easy access to the material – on the contrary, this textuality limited or filtered the text's spread through this person who had "mastered" it.[55] This model may be of use in the Armenian clerical settings in which the *Alexander Romance* was copied and in which these *kafas* were composed and written down: Xačʻatur Kečʻaṙecʻi, Grigoris Ałtʻamarcʻi, Zakaria Gnunecʻi and others as textual masters, explicating it through *kafas* for their audiences. This interpretation then circulated in the channels of scribal copying between monastic centres. As Vardan Aygekcʻi reportedly used animal stories to make clear the lessons of his sermons, so too it appears that some of the *kafas* were used to guide the understanding of the history and legends of Alexander, controlling the reception of the *Alexander Romance* among certain Armenian audiences. Many of the *kafas* are not focused on animals, but in their commentary on Alexander provide a similarly Christian approach to understanding him, as in some lines of a *kafa* translated by Christina Maranci: "You resemble the bright morning star. Born of the sea and the leader of Adam's race, nevertheless there is one greater."[56] That selected *kafas* of the *Alexander Romance* were later copied in 16th, 17th and 18th century *taḷaran* and *žoḷovacu*, separate from the narrative, in the same manuscripts as works by luminary religious poets such as Grigor Narekacʻi, supports the likelihood that they were seen to have some spiritual importance beyond being entertaining short poems.

This is not the only path that the Armenian *Alexander Romance* took – an abbreviated, popularised version also came to exist[57] – but it is the path followed by this study. The *kafas* about the unbelievable men and creatures at the remote edges of the world examined here demonstrate the long process of transmission of a narrative such as the *Alexander Romance.* In its new, Armenian context(s), the *Alexander Romance* inspired acts of creation – the *kafas* – that became vital to the narrative's existence: adhortatory companion-texts that place it, emphatically, within a Christian world. Subsequently, they were

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55   John Miles Foley, *How to Read an Oral Poem* (Urbana and Chicago, 2002), pp. 69–70, citing Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, 1983), p. 90.

56   Maranci, "Word and Image," p. 21.

57   Topchyan, "The Alexander Romance in Medieval Armenian Historiography."

circulated within the Armenian literary tradition. Translation from Greek was only the beginning of local processes.

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Mauropous as Menander's Student of Rhetoric

An Exile Progymnasma

Jovana Anđelković

The influence of late antique rhetorical handbooks on Byzantine texts is often taken for granted by scholars, who take it as a matter of fact that educated Byzantines learned how to compose orations on the basis of age-old rhetorical exercises.[1] We even recognize these ancient rules of composition in preserved Byzantine speeches.[2] I suggest here that returning to the rulebooks themselves and considering the transmission to and circulation of those classical and late antique texts among Byzantine writers can prove fruitful. In this paper I therefore focus more on the question of *how* one eleventh-century scholar used the traditional knowledge of rhetoric, rather than on the obvious fact that he *did* use it.[3] I will analyse here the structural background and stylistic solutions

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1   Researchers have come a long way from the idea of simple *mimesis* of Byzantine authors (Herbert Hunger, "On the Imitation (ΜΙΜΗΣΙΣ) of Antiquity in Byzantine Literature", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* Vol. 23 (1969–1970), pp. 15–38), to recognising a unique authorial intervention in medieval texts (for example: Stratis Papaioannou, "Voice, Signature, Mask: The Byzantine Author," in *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature*, ed. Aglae Pizzone (Berlin 2014), pp. 29–41; Elizabeth Jeffreys ed, *Rhetoric in Byzantium* (Aldershot-Burlington, 2003); Vessela Valiavitcharska, *Rhetoric and Rhythm in Byzantium: The Sound of Persuasion* (Cambridge 2013)). However the balance between these two approaches still remains to be struck.

2   Aside from many *progimnasmata* Byzantine intellectuals drafted for practice or teaching (Herbert Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner, Vol I*, (München 1978), pp. 92–120), a suitable example – and the one that addresses the subject of written and oral rhetoric itself – is Michael Choniates' speech *An Address to Those Who Accuse Me of Having No Desire for Exhibition*. Emmanuel Bourbouhakis, "Rhetoric and Performance in Byzantium," in *The Byzantine World,* ed. Paul Stephenson (New York 2010), pp. 175–187, 179.

3   Careful structural and linguistic analyses of rhetorical techniques do occasionally appear in contemporary scholarship. However, when this occurs it is usually not the main focus of the study but rather a secondary component. The Art of Byzantine oratory, nevertheless occupies a very important place in recent scholarship: Stratis Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos – Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium*, (Cambridge, 2013); Charles Barber, Stratis Papaioannou, eds., *Michael Psellos on Literature and Art. A Byzantine Perspective on Aesthetics,* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2017); Jeffrey Beneker, Craig A. Gibson, eds. et trans., *The Rhetorical Exercises of Nikephoros Basilakes. Progymnasmata from Twelfth-century Byzantium,* (Harvard, 2016).

used to shape Ioannes Mauropous' letter 64, treating it as a "case-study" that demonstrates the effective deployment of rhetoric in letter-writing.

Rhetorical training was essential in Byzantium's surprisingly discursive political culture and its traces in literature are undeniable.[4] As a consequence, all manners of texts are often labeled as "rhetorical". Michael Jeffreys identifies a problem with this practice, noting the negative associations of the term "rhetorical" with writings, which we either cannot easily identify, or simply fail to comprehend due to obscure language.[5] The artificial language and general obscurity that marks rhetorical texts results, however, from adherence to rules for rhetorical composition that were created in ancient Greece and inherited by the Byzantines.[6] Read against such commonly adhered-to rules, all ambiguous components fall into place and apparent discrepancies obtain meaning in a larger system of literary symbols. The standard set of subjects or the arrangement pattern deployed for narrating events are therefore more often than not, far from random. They provide the audience with material needed for analysing some critical elements of the text as causes or consequences, which rhetors of epideictic oratory can completely avoid mentioning.[7] Not all rhetorical handbooks recommended identical techniques and a lot of the fine-tuning language tools were the topic of frequent debate among students, teachers, writers and commentators. Some general Aristotelian instructions – mostly regarding categorisation – were widely accepted. Rhetoric was thus sorted according to the "three-genre" division (judicial, deliberative and epideictic).[8]

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4   We know from Kekaumenos' example that even military officials may have been rhetorically trained Charlotte Roueché, "The Literary Bacground of Kekaumenos", in: *Literacy, Education and Manuscript Transmission in Byzantium and Beyond,* ed. Catherine Holmes, Judith Waring, (Leiden-Boston-Köln 2002), pp. 111–138. On the importance of rhetorical training and exercises used: Stratis Papaioannou ed. et trans., "On Rhetoric, based on Longinos' 'Art of Rhetoric'", Charles Barber, Stratis Papaioannou, eds., *Michael Psellos on Literature and Art. A Byzantine Perspective on Aesthetics,* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2017), pp. 74–77.

5   Michael Jeffreys, "'Rhetorical' Texts," in *Rhetoric in Byzantium*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys, Ashgate (Aldershot-Burlington, 2003), p. 87.

6   "No one who reads Byzantine literature at all need be told that, whereas the ideal constantly being held forth is clarity and simplicity, clear and simple is precisely what the literature is often not." George L. Kustas, "The Function and Evolution of Byzantine Rhetoric.", in *Viator. Medieval and Renaissance studies,* vol 1 (1971), pp. 55–74, 71.

7   Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham-Burlington, 2009), p. 65; Some rhethorical manuals, like Hermogenes, directly recommend the omission of the cause in descriptive texts. Hermogenes shows, with the example of a storm, how awe-inspiring a picture can be if the cause is unexplained or left open to interpretation.

8   George A. Kennedy, "The Genres of Rhetoric," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330. B.C.–A.D. 400*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Brill Academic Publishers

Speech writing was in turn seen as going through five developmental fazes (invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery).[9] Finally the speech itself was usually made up of four constituent elements (introduction, narration, proof of the facts stated in narration and conclusion).[10] Working with these classifications, authors were trained to make the best possible use of given forms and to combine various *ekphraseis, chrias,* or *topoi* to their liking.[11]

The Rhetorical handbooks themselves differed in their structure. Aphthonios' 4th century *Progymnasmata* were, for example, designed to teach the student how to generate separate universal parts of the speech (διήγημα, γνώμη, θέσις, ἠθοποιία, ἔκφρασις, σύγκρισις, etc.).[12] These were in turn used in all three genres. Aphthonios' instructions are short and are supported by written samples (like the *Ekphrasis* of the Temple and Acropolis in Alexandria).[13] In Menander the Rhetor's "Division of epideictic speeches", students find detailed directions for composition, arrangement and enhancement of a specified speech-type. Those are sorted according to diverse social occasions – birthdays, weddings, funerals, arrivals or departures.[14] In the tenth century, theoretical treatises on oratory became very popular in Byzantium and such handbooks were eagerly copied.[15] The oldest surviving manuscript of Menander originated from this time (middle of the tenth century).[16] Also, the fusion of Greek

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(Boston-Leiden, 2001), pp. 43–51; However, the need for flexibility was recognised early. The same stands for the arrangement applies in epideictic oratory as well.

9   George A. Kennedy, "Historical survey of rhetoric," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330. B.C.–A.D. 400*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Brill Academic Publishers (Boston-Leiden 2001), p. 5.

10 Wilhelm Wuellner, "Arrangement" in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330. B.C.–A.D. 400*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Brill Academic Publis hers (Boston-Leiden, 2001), p. 69.

11 Jeffreys, "'Rhetorical' texts," p. 94.

12 Alexander P. Kazhdan et al. ed., *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium,* (New York-Oxford, 1991), pp. 130, 1728.

13 Christianus Walz ed., *Rhetores Graeci,* vol 1, 104–108.

14 Two late-third or early-fourth century AD treaties with advice on prose-hymn writing, and epideictic oratory, ascribed to "Menander". Donald Andrew Russel and Nigel Guy Willson, eds., *Menander Rhetor,* (Oxford, 1981), p. xi (hereafter cited as *Menander Rhetor,* while precise caput numeration will remain in the main text due to the frequency of quotation); On some different interpretations of Menander's life and rhetorical writings, see Malcolm Heath, *Menander, a Rhetor in Context,* (New York, 2004).

15 Stratis Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos,* p. 33;.

16 *Menander Rhetor,* xl; Byzantine authors operated within a spectrum of rhetorical possibility that ranged from a limited number of rhetorical models – most important among them: Aphthonios, Hermogenes, Dionysios of Halikarnassos and, slightly less popular, but still frequently used, Menander Rhetor – to divinely inspired writers. Stratis Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos – Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium,* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 52–53.

rhetorical theory (such as Hermogenes and Aphthonios) with canonical early Byzantine patristic rhetoric (Gregory of Nazianzos) may be dated in this very same time.[17]

But what of the epistle? Another scholarly tendency this period (re)introduced and popularized was letter-collecting. Practical manuals for letter writing did not exist but some general rhetorical precepts were nevertheless applied in the composition of epistles.[18] The deliberative (advisory) genre is, for instance, often recognized in Byzantine letters since their authors often sought to urge a person either to pursue or to avoid something.[19] In matters of structure and arrangement, however, letters differ from sermons, mostly because of their communicative function. Gregory of Nazianzos, one of the most influential models when it comes to epistolography in Byzantium, openly emphasized the conversational character of narration in letters (λαλιά).[20] Functional similarities between epistles and sermons are, however, evident and various letters have been labeled as "rhetorical". Demosthenes therefore wrote extensively in that "rhetorical" manner during the time of his exile (just before the Lamian war – epistles 1–4), in an attempt to defend his career.[21] Classical and, as it is believed today, Byzantine authors exploited the potential of emotional relief in letters which turned, through such appeal to emotion, into powerful tools for persuasion. Philostratos (3.c. CE) praises Aristides for the effect of his letter on Marcus Aurelius, who burst into tears while reading about the desolate and ravaged Smyrna, while Menander (4.c. CE) was well aware of the power

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17   Stratis Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos,* p. 62; On the nature and significance of Byzantine compilatory literature (rhetorical, military or any other), Catherine Holmes, "Byzantine Political Culture and Compilation Literature in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Some Preliminary Inquiries*," Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 64 (2010), 55–80.

18   There were some basic instrucitons by Libanius and Demetrius of Phalerum with lists of existing types of letters Jeffrey T. Reed, "The Epistle," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330. B.C.–A.D. 400*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Brill Academic Publishers (Boston-Leiden 2001), p. 174; But Byzantine letters were guided more by some epistolary role models like Gregory of Nazianzos or Basil the Great.

19   Reed, "The epistle," p. 175.

20   Brian E. Daley, SJ, *Gregory of Nazianzus,* (New York, 2006), p. 178; It should be pointed out here that Menander has in his categorisation of speeches the special type of *conversation* speech, called *λαλιά*, where rhetors have a chance to fuse deliberative and epideictic oratory in a very flexible form, so they can praise, advise or simply express all their anger, pain and pleasure freely. *Menander Rhetor,* pp. 114–126. It is hard to say if Byzantine readers of Gregory's letters interpreted his remark as a direction towards some specific epideictic form of oratory, or as a plain communicational character of a text. Nevertheless, it is usefull to note such a structurally-undetermined type of speech when we have in mind the arrangement in letters and their connections with rhetorical cannons.

21   Reed, "The epistle," pp. 186–187.

compassion could have when it comes to persuasiveness.[22] He therefore advises the student with these words: "Pass next to the topic of vivid description, in which you should elaborate the present misfortune, how the city has fallen to the ground. (…) After such appeals to pity, you can add: 'this is why we come as your suppliants.'" (Menander Rhetor, The ambassador's speech).[23] It is my contention, judging from the tone of letter 64 in the letter collection of the erudite Ioannes Mauropous, the instructions for writing outlined in Menander's treaties appear in this epistle.

Moving away from general remarks about rhetorical manuals, it would be useful to place Ioannes Mauropous in his social context. When it comes to mapping the position of particular individuals within Constantinopolitan circles of power and influence in eleventh century, source-generated problems arise. We have no extant writings from undoubtedly powerful characters like Constantinos Leichoudes, while for others, such as the famous Michael Psellos, the veritable flood of texts drowns other evidence in torrents of eloquence.[24] Somewhere between these extreme examples lies the figure of Ioannes Mauropous.

There are two main sources on which we depend when it comes to reconstruction of Mauropous' life and career. One is his personally-edited collection of epigrams, letters and sermons.[25] The other is an *Encomion* from Michael Psellos' pen.[26] From these works, we can safely reconstruct a basic outline of Mauropous' biography (not necessarily in the following order). We thus know that he came from Paphlagonia to Constantinople to study when he was young. He remained, for a long time, though it is unclear how long, a professor in the capital. He then took on the monastic habit and worked at court, also for an

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22   Ruth Webb, "Imagination and the Arousal of Emotions in Greco-Roman Rhetoric," in *The Passions in Roman Thought and Literature*, eds. Susanna Morton Braund and Chrisopher Gill, (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 114,115.

23   *Menander Rhetor,* p. 181.

24   For different interpretations of the relations within the imperial court, as well as believability of Psellos' statements, see Michael Jeffreys, "Psellos and 'His Emperors' – Fact, Fiction and Genre," in *History as literature in Byzantium,* ed. Ruth Macrides, Ashgate, (Farnham-Burlington, 2010), pp. 73–93.

25   Johannes Bollig and Paul de Lagarde eds., *Iohannis Euchaitorum Metropolitae quae in Codice Vaticano Graeco 676 Supersunt,* (Göttingen 1882). Hereafter, cited as *Vat.Gr. 676,* ep. (if refering to a poem) or as or. (if refering to an oration) and according to the numeration provided in the edition. In case of letters, I will be refering to the latest eddition *The Letters of Ioannes Mauropous Metropolitan of Euchaita,* trans. and ed. Apostolos Karpozilos, (Thessalonike, 1990): *Mauropous,* according to the editor's numeraton; if referring to the editorial preface or commentary, = *Letters of Ioannes Mauropous,* by page number.

26   Michaelis Pselli, *Orationes Panegyricae,* ed. George T. Dennis, (Leipzig 1994), pp. 143–175.

unknown period of time. Then came his appointment as *synkelos* and metropolitan of Euchaita and finally his return to Constantinople. These life milestones can all be gleaned from *both* Psellos' and Mauropous' works. There are also various other, highly plausible, reconstructions of his life and work,[27] but only those "facts" cited here seem to be generally adopted as "safe" and uncontroversial.

One of the most "controversial" questions of Mauropous' biography is the issue of his ordination. When and under which circumstances did he go to Euchaita? Furthermore, was his appointment to that see conceived as a form of exile?[28] Letter 64 is especially important for Mauropous' opus because it deals with the biggest challenge in his career – his appointment to and arrival at Euchaita. It is addressed to the patriarch and it is marked by a negative tone that scholars treat as "rhetorical exaggeration".[29] Such "exaggeration" is especially interesting when read with an eye on Menander's rhetorical handbook. Mauropous' narration seems to display some traits from three different types of speech outlined by the ancient teachers: the "arrival" (περὶ ἐπιβατηρίου), the speech on "how to praise a country" (πῶς χρῆ χώραν ἐπαίνειν) and that on "how to praise a city" (πῶς χρῆ πόλεις ἐπαίνειν).[30] In fact the arrival speech figures more prominently, though within it we also find incorporated the two other types. Since Mauropous stated that the reason for writing letter 64 was to pay respects to his benefactor and to briefly describe to him the situation in Euchaita[31] (where he had just arrived), we find in it a combination of "land description" with an address to the church (the patriarch), as a stand-in for the usual address to the (state) official. Both elements – the description and the

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27   Apostolos Karpozilos, *Συμβολὴ στὴ Μελέτη τοῦ Βίου καὶ τοῦ Ἔργου τοῦ Ἰωάννη Μαυρόποδος,* (Ioannina, 1982); Rosario Anastasi, "Su tre epigrammi di Giovanni di Euchaita," *Siculorum Gymnasium* 25, (1972), pp. 56–60; Joan Hussey, "The canons of John Mauropous," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 37 (1947), pp. 70–73. Floris Bernard, *The beats of the pen – social context of reading and writing poetry in eleventh-century Constantinople*, ph.D thesis, (Universiteit Gent, 2009–2010).

28   After the publication of Mauropous' translated letters (1990), a discussion was launched, regarding some biografical observations. One of the problems addresed in the articles of Alexander Kazhdan ("Some Problems in the Biography of John Mauropous," Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik 43 (1993), pp. 87–113, and "Some Problems in the Biography of John Mauropous II," *Byzantion* LXV/fasc.2 (1995), pp. 362–387.) and Apostolos Karpozilos (Apostolos Karpozilos, "Biography of Ioanes Mauropous, Again," *Hellenica* 44 (1994), pp. 51–60.), was the time of departure from Constantinople, and the question of exile.

29   Alexander Kazhdan, "Some Problems", p. 110.

30   *Menander Rhetor,* pp. 94–114, pp. 28–33, pp. 33–42.

31   *Mauropous,* 64:43–47.

address – are usually found in the arrival speech inventory.[32] Not all sermons followed this exact order. They were rather generally guided by such rules, adjusting them to the given circumstances.[33] Menander had, therefore, outlined the parts needed in the speech but individual writers could assemble them according to their liking.[34] Let me therefore sketch the general arrangement of an arrival speech (with a few variations dependent on whether the preferred address is to a visited city, a home city or a governor):

(I)   The *prooemium* (where upon the arrival the author should express joy and focus on his good fortune [378:3–16])
(II) A description of the current situation (of the subjects) (378:16)
(III) An *encomium*
   (a)   of the governor that includes a comparison of the governor to his subjects (378:16–382:10)
   (b)   of the city and its beauty (with descriptions on nature, nurture and joy) (382:10–385:1);
   (c)   That takes the format of a patriotic speech with elaborate descriptions of nature, nurture and accomplishments without the element of joy (385:1–388:15)
(IV) an *epilogue*
   (a)   the epilogue with praise and welcoming (381:6);/
   (b)   the epilogue (386:21).

Mauropous' letter narration is arranged in a similar manner:

(I)   A *prooemium* with greetings to the Patriarch and an immediate introduction to his troubles (64:1–8);
(II) A description of his misfortunes during the travel to that place with the focus on his desperation (64:6–24);
(III) A short of his current (spiritual) situation followed by the reason for writing (64:29–47);
(IV) A description of the subjects (64:47–55);
(V)   A description of the land (55–63);
(VI) A salutation (64:64–70).

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32   Specific techniques were suggested for rhetors who wished to describe space (either of a city or of a whole country) and they differed from ones used for people (addresses in general). Description of land could be found in several different rhetorical instructions Menander composed: *Menander Rhetor,* pp. 28–58; 94–114;

33   The two arrangement types – "disposition internal to the discourse," which is the arrangement accoridng to the rules for the "parts of the speech", and "disposition external to the discourse," the arrangement determined by utility, acommodated to the circumstances, where the orator uses his judgement to modify the order. Wuellner, "Arrangement", p. 52.

34   George A. Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric Under Christian Emperors* (Princeton 1983), pp. 69.

It must be stressed that the structure outlined above was adapted to the epistolary form that was, as noted earlier, quite loosely defined (if at all).[35] Rhetorical treatises were not strict rulebooks but sets of guidelines, which were to be adjusted freely.[36] Mauropous did not therefore follow Menander's recommendations word for word, nor did the form of his text allow for that. However, I believe that letter 64 (or in any case, the edited version which can be found in Mauropous' letter collection) could be read as a reversed arrival speech. One reason that suggests this is the usage of rhetorical figures in the text. Mauropous follows Menander's advice regarding methods, as this is presented in the "Arrival Speech" example. However, instead of focusing on the local official or the people of Euchaita, the bishop addressed his letter to the patriarch. This marks Mauropous' letter as different from its oratorical archetype. The other, more apparent reason why we should treat letter 64 as a reverse arrival speech is the existence of the actual arrival speech within Mauropous' collection of works. Oration 184 is the official sermon created to commemorate his arrival to Euchaita.[37] Here the addressees are the people and the oration displays all the expected characteristics of an arrival speech. If, however, we follow Menander's instructions for the composition and implementation of each part of the speech, the rhetorical character of the patriarchal epistle begins to gradually reveal itself. Let us then follow the stages of this revelation.

1   The Joy That Was Not

Menander suggests that:

> The *prooemium* is based on joy from the start, since the speaker must give the impression of sharing either the pleasure of the cities at receiving an admired and praised governor, or that of the governor in coming at a moment of good fortune. (378: 4–7) (…) You should say: "With fortunate

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35   But the letters were adaptable and the same set of rhetorical rules applied. Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric,* pp. 70–71.

36   In Psellos' commentary of rhetoric based on Longinus' "Art of Rhetoric" the discussion about arrangement and memory in the process of speech composition is left out, as the existing material on this topic (provided by Longinus) is reduced. We can assume that the order of arrangement became more flexible in the middle Byzantine period. Papaioannou ed. et trans., "On Rhetoric", p. 76.

37   *Vat.Gr.676*, or. 184, pp. 160–165.

omens have you come from the emperor, brilliant as a ray of the sun."[38] (378: 10–12)

For Mauropous joy was clearly a challenge. His letter to the patriarch proves disappointing on that front. It is in fact full of negative emotions, marked by disillusionment and misery. We therefore read in the very beginning of the letter:

> But if the spirit of God which dwells in him and his gift of insight would have deemed it worthy to pay some slight attention to this remote place, and would have realized the troubles which I have encountered right from the first moment and almost before I set foot on the ground of this place, I think, on the contrary, he would wonder how I am now able to utter a word; because as if by prearrangement, I had just barely recovered from the toils of the journey, having spent almost two months on the road, when I was immediately met by assaults of winds, enveloped by hurricanes and storms of evil, the sea of trials swelling up against me, perils and calamities confronting me from all sides. These descended upon me all of a sudden and at once so that I lost my senses (to speak the truth), struck by the unforeseen disillusionment of my hopes. I lost not only my wits, as I had thought, but also the sense that I was alive – in such a manner I was carried off and swept completely away by these adversities, miserable, inexperienced, untrained, unprepared for such evils until I was finally thrown into an ocean of the utmost apathy and despondency, so that I can also cite quite truthfully the scriptural "I have come into deep waters and the flood sweeps over me".[39] (64:4–20)

Mauropous' story opens with his arrival on Euchaitan soil (even though he never mentions the name of the place).[40] He describes his new home as god-forsaken (on the edge, the furthest – ἐσχατιά (64:5)). He continues by recounting the calamities that afflicted him during his journey, before he ever stepped on Euchaita's quite underwhelming lands. In Menander's instructions on the praise of a country or city, there is a section devoted to country/city's geographical position and in this section negative remarks such as the ones made

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38 *Menander Rhetor,* p. 95.
39 *Mauropous,* pp. 171.
40 On the inclination toward name-omission in Byzantine letter collections, see Alexander Riehle, "Epistolography as autobiography, remarks on the letter-collections of Nikephoros Choumnos," *ΠΑΡΕΚΒΟΛΑΙ* vol.2 (2012), 1–22. Even in comparison with other letter-writers of his time, Mauropous was cautious to avoid almost all names in his collection.

by Mauropous were highly discouraged. Rather, if the city is, for example, at the end of the *oecumene*, its isolation should be couched in allusive language such as: "it shrinks shyly from new-comers."[41]

2   A Ray of Light after the Cloudy Storm

Menander suggests that the *prooemium* should be followed by the description of the current situation and words of gratitude:

> When night and darkness covered the world, you were seen like the sun and at once dissolved all the difficulties. (378:21–23) (…) All men breathed again, when the dangers passed over like a cloud; (378:25–26) (…) We owe very great thanks to the emperors for their other labors on our behalf, but we should be right to admit yet greater gratitude to them for sending down to us such a man… In this type of speech, try always to abridge the encomion of the emperor, and not dwell on it, so as to avoid doubling your subject. If you have actions of the governor to relate, you should do so.[42] (378:31–32, 379:1–5)

It becomes clear that, as a church prelate arriving at his new office, Mauropous had a clean rhetorical template available to him within which to celebrate the occasion, were he inclined to use it. Were he conducting praise "by the book", the skies above him should have cleared upon arrival at Euchaita. The roles of the governor and the emperor outlined by Menander are taken up in Mauropous' letter by the bishop himself on the one hand and by his "clerical emperor", the patriarch. On the other hand, following Menander's suggestion, Mauropous found a relatable subject with which to link the two men, in the form of hardships and waves. Only he did not dwell on this theme for too long. He rather quickly turned to writing about current troubles:

> And as soon as I threw off the sea-water taking a deep breath and rubbed the salt from my eyes, at first, I was able to see a little although rather poorly and weakly but then I saw right away my Lord and leader just like another Jesus Christ walking safely above the waves. For my Lord himself

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41   *Menander Rhetor,* 39.

42   Menander describes how to rhetorically amplify the benefits imparted by a new governer to his people by showing how his arrival improved the condition of his subjects. (*Menander Rhetor,* pp. 95–97);

has not been free of trials, even if the nobility and the piety of his great soul, no matter what the pressure, would ever surrender its impassibility. But your servant is still swept by the currents of the waves and is greatly exhausted both in body and soul; he imitates the distressed Peter in the sea and shouts to his Savior and teacher – "Lord save me". Salvation is attained through prayer.[43] (64:28–36)

For a couple of lines his readers assume that the sun is about to dry up this metropolitan (shortly, Mauropous "regained his senses" 64:27–28), but then the narration slips to another moist excursus, this time on the greatness of his lord (i.e. the patriarch) who managed to rise above the waves of his own troubles.[44] The current situation, described in this passage, is far from sunny, although hope for improvement is offered in the end. In a paragraph full of religious references, we find a subtle plea addressed to the patriarch: he who has braved many storms could now use his power to help Mauropous "rise above" the waves. Here, the letter evolves into a Middle Byzantine piece of literature *par excellence*. Classical Greek patterns form the structure, while the imagery is colored in Christian hues. This type of a fusion is specific to the period from tenth century on, when Gregory of Nazianzos' works were at the peak of their popularity, and the Aphthonian-Hermogenic corpus was subjected to numerous new commentaries.[45]

3   The People

Moving on to the citizens of the praised city, Menander suggests that:

The epilogue[46] should be elaborated by having regard to the scope of the subject, representing the inhabitants greeting the governor;[47] (381:6–7)...

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43   *Mauropous,* p. 172.

44   In this comparison the patriarch *rises* and walks "safely above the waves" (64:30–31), where in Menander's instruction for the encomiastic part, the example given was "he will face up to danger like a good helmsman, to save the ship as the waves rise high." (*Menander Rhetor,* 99).

45   Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric,* pp. 291–292. Psellos commentaries were recently published in Barber, Papaioannou, eds., *Michael Psellos on Literature and Art*, especially pp. 20–78.

46   Of the previously opened *encomion* for the new governor.

47   In the variation marked as IIIa and IVa, which is in connection with the new governor – so the description of joyful people is actually in tight connection with the *encomion* to the governor. *Menander Rhetor,* pp. 101.

If it is desired to use this form [the arrival speech] in addressing a city, it should be noted that the speaker will draw the material from his own attitude and goodwill towards the city, and from its appearance.[48] (382:10–13) (…) (Accomplishments are an indication of the character and policy of the population, independently of competitive actions) You should say therefore that they are hospitable to strangers, law-abiding, in regard to contracts, dwell together in harmony and behave to strangers as they do to one another.[49] (384:20–25)

Menander's advice notwithstanding, letter 64 unfolds in a more complicated manner, since it attempts to meet different rhetorical needs. The discussion of the city's people can either be tied to the *encomion* of the new governor – in which case they appear to be expressing joy and goodwill to their new leader – or to the description of the city when the speaker draws material from his own attitude. A city's "accomplishments" and their "experiences" (Menander treats cities as organisms which achieve goals here) play an important role in this part of the speech. Since, however, a new metropolitan has little material to work with on those fronts, he can but draw a connection between his subjects and himself.[50]

    After presenting an account of his fate in this Anatolian backwater, and having written about his benefactor's influence upon it, Mauropous declares that he would give a short description of the situation in Euchaita. This is where the letter obviously differs from his actual arrival speech, which was delivered as an inaugural address. The question of believability lingers between these two opposite statements. How much by way of *realia* can we extract from the letter about life in this city?[51] When it comes to the description of his congregation, Mauropous has only words of praise, both in the epistle and in the sermon. In

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48   Ibid. p. 103.
49   This is aplicable if the city is the subject of the address, not the governor (option IIIb). *Menander Rhetor,* p. 107.
50   The description of people should be divided in four cathegories (*Menander Rhetor,* pp. 103–108), but since an important rule of letter writing is brevity (Margaret Mullett, "Epistolography," in *The Oxford Handbook in Byzantine Studies*, eds. Elizabeth Jeffreys, John Haldon, Robin Cormac, (New York, 2008), pp. 882–889.), Mauropous' description lacks excessive details.
51   *The letters of Ioannes Mauropous,* p. 22, pp. 248–249; The fact that the land description was used simply as a stylistical tool becomes even more obvious when put next to two different, yet contemporary, descriptions: Mauropous' description of Euchaita in his inaugural address and Psellos' consolation letter to his teacher after his departure. All three vary in content and the land portrayal serves to prove different arguments. In the case of Psellos, see Marc Lauxtermann, "The Intertwined Lives of Michael Psellos and John

the epistle, this appears somewhat inconsistent with his general negative attitude towards Euchaita. It does, nevertheless, correlate with Menander's directions. We therefore read:

> The church and the people (…) seem excellent and beautiful. For they are fairly pious and are already or are becoming well-instructed, (…) no one of them thought to treat your envoy with unfriendliness or to consider him as trouble and burden[52] (64:48–53).

Furthermore we note that his congregation accepted him like "they had grown up and lived together from childhood". (64:54–55). If we follow the handbook's rules closely, we can see that the subject of the people appears to be tightly linked to the description and praise of a governor. Menander seems to suggest that the governor and his citizens should appear as an indivisible whole. Since in letter 64 Mauropous stood in the place of that governor, it would have been unwise for him to cast the people in negative light. Furthermore, aspects of the people's "accomplishments" and "experience" are briefly noted trough reference to the congregation's piety ("For they are fairly pious and are already or *are becoming* well-instructed"64:49–50). Given the positive take on the Euchaitans, the land's flaws are consigned by Mauropous to the description of the physical environment and the land's products.

4   The Land

We thus finally come to the description of the land, which hosts these admirable people. On that issue, Menander proposes:

> In a third section, you should describe the nature; (…) in the section of climate, show that it is healthy;[53]
> The praise must be arranged viz. pleasure and utility;[54]
> The topic of the products (…) is to be considered under three aspects, namely time, quality and quantity. (1) time: whether they remain intact for the whole year; (2) quality, viz. pleasure and utility, i.e. whether they

Mauropous," in *The Letters of Psellos: Cultural Networks and Historical Realities,* Michael Jeffreys and Marc D. Lauxtermann eds. (Oxford, 2016), p. 124.

52   *Mauropous,* p. 172.
53   *Menander Rhetor,* 105. (*The speech of arrival*).
54   *Menander Rhetor,* 29 (*How to praise a country*).

are harmless and whether they are pleasant to the senses, taste, sight, etc. (3) quantity, i.e. whether they are numerous.[55]

Here Mauropous went well beyond Menander combining his general instructions for the arrival speech and the techniques from two other manuals (on "How to praise a country" and "How to praise a city"). We thus see that Euchaita's products and land failed, according to Mauropous, all the required qualifications. "Apart from this, the land was desolate, uninhabited, unpleasant and without trees, vegetation, woods, or shade, a total wilderness full of neglect, exceedingly bereft of fame and glory."(64:55–58). Mauropous notes that Euchaita did produce grain, but explained that this was achieved with much toil.[56] Due to its poverty, wine and oil are lacking (64:58–59). Finally, when it comes to the matters of health, pleasure and utility, all figuring in Menander's instructions, Mauropous explicitly stated that there was no fruit and fish or "anything that comforts people like me who are ill, as well as that which is necessary for the enjoyment." (64:60–62). One more remark should be added, in regard to the motif of poverty and desolation. The use of such images is highly advised if a rhetor is to have a persuasive effect based on pity on his addressee. Seen through the eyes of antique orators, emotions of sorrow and compassion are generally best produced with such descriptions and might help in gaining favors.[57] When Leo of Synada complained about the lack of staple goods in his letter to the emperor, he too underlined the shortage of oil, wine and products, which maintain one's health. In the mentioned letter, Leo composed a list of needs that should create compassion and hopefully trigger an eventual confirmation of a *chrysobull*.[58] As rhetorical handbooks advise – a

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55   *Menander Rhetor,* 37 (*How to praise a city*).

56   Which suggests the answers on the question of time in the product's qualifications Menander categorized.

57   In Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* it is stressed how Aristides' use of wasteland-imagery made an incredible effect. Ruth Webb, "Imagination and the arousal of emotions", p. 115. The opposition between urban civilisation and vast uninhabited tracts beyond, as well as the lost monuments of the city. Mauropous words sound quite similar to that: "a total wilderness full of neglect, excedingly berft of fame and glory." (64:56–58).

58   Letter 43 in Leo of Synada, *The Correspondance of Leo Metropolitan of Synada and Syncellus,* ed. et trans. Martha Pollard Vinson, (Washington 1985), pp. 69–71. Leo's letter to the emperor and Mauropous' letter to the patriarch have some interesting similarities. They both mention oil and wine as staple foods and consider grain production. However, it seems that the techniqal arrangement and description are somewhat different. Leo's letter is shorter and rather formal, so that it seems as an enumeration of goods expected with the chrysobull. Menander makes land the subject of his description and he tries to integrate the assesment of products as attributes of the place, which is distinctive

good portrayal of misfortunes will evoke empathy and ensure much needed assistance.[59] There are some indications that Mauropous tried to work his way back into the capital using all means available and his rhetorical appeal to pity could, therefore, be seen as a part of a broader social, political and rhetorical lobbying effort.[60]

After extensive descriptions of misfortunes and poverty, the author finishes his letter with words of gratitude for his lord and "benefactor", for gifts offered to his person by him "whether requested or not".[61] If the patriarch in question is in fact the patriarch who appointed Mauropous to his office, the unwanted gifts mentioned in the epilogue acquire a clearer meaning. With the comparison and interpretation offered in this paper I do not intent to determine if this stylistic solution made it into the letter that the patriarch *actually* received, but to draw attention to the editing process Mauropous undertook while preparing his collection of writings for posterity. The matter of unwilling undertaking of duties forced upon him should be underlined here once more, in the context of the complete collection. In letter 27, placed right after Mauropous' address to the emperor in which he asks him not to use force on defeated rebels,[62] the author engages in a little introspective inquiry: "if I bring myself to obey someone I do so because I have been so persuaded and not because I have been compelled."[63]

5 Literary Context

Having examined the structure of our letter let us, for a brief moment, turn to its purpose and place in Mauropous' literary opus. Aside from the arrangement of material, where we see Menander's rules applied quite ingeniously,

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encomiastic technique correlated to Menander's rhetorical handbook. These two letters also differ in structure. Mauropous' letter resembles a speech while Leo's letter has an informative character that would better fit a report or an official plea.

59 In Psellos' synopsis of the rhetorical forms (based on Hermogenes) we once again find a similar argumentative technique of *showing onself at a disadvantage willingly*. Stratis Papaioannou ed. et trans. "Synopsis of the Rhetorical Forms, based on Hermogenes' 'On Forms'", in Berber, Papaioannou, eds. *Michael Psellos on Literature and Art*, p. 30.

60 *The Letters of Ioanes Mauropous,* pp. 23–24.

61 The theme of unwanted ordination was repeted several times previously in the letter collection (e.g the mention of the very specific δῶρον of ordination in the letter 38.); It could be confirmed with Psellos' *Encomion* Michaelis Pselli, *Orationes Panegyricae*, p. 160, 463–466.

62 After the rebellion of Leon Tornikios (1047). Apostolos Karpozilos, *Mauropous,* 221–222.

63 *Letters of Ioannes Mauropous,* p. 108.

and given the shift from positive to negative tone and content, letter 64 appears to take the form of a reversed arrival speech (rather than a reversed speech on the praise of a city or country), in that it mirrors the format of an actual arrival speech, written for the people of Euchaita by their new metropolitan. Among Mauropous' works, in a corpus he personally composed and edited (as he states in the preface of his book),[64] after a number of epigrams and letters, there are 14 orations, which he displayed as the best specimens of his work.[65] Thus, in the same manuscript, we can find the report of his arrival to Euchaita in a form of a letter modeled by Menander's rules for an arrival speech and also the actual speech presented upon his arrival. The oration is structured similarly: In the introduction, words of praise and stories of prosperity that reached Mauropous seem to have been proven true, and so he feels (moderately) joyful to be in such a place. This is followed by the description of the church, the land and the people, only for the author to then dwell on the previous and current situation, promising to resolve all the troubles his congregation might have. Finally, the special connection between him (as a new "governor") and his subjects is stressed and their welcome is saluted.[66] Examination of all the specific rhetorical figures used in this speech would require a separate study, yet, some ambiguity draws attention even at a single glance. One of the examples can be seen in his elaborated description of the Euchaitans' wisdom, piety and hard work. Menander classifies three types of encomia when it comes to country-praising: "of good repute", "ambivalent" and "paradoxical."[67] The first category simply chooses good examples. In the second we find some attributes praised and some chosen for blame. Finally in the third we see the display of some obviously bad characteristics, which are defended and praised ironically. If one were to construct a "paradoxical encomium," one would praise barren and less fertile land as one *that teaches philosophy and endurance.*[68] Whether Mauropous' excursus falls under this third Menandrian category is hard to say without a thorough structural and stylistic analysis of the speech. The similarities are, however, marked and could lead to such an interpretation.

In concluding our reading of letter 64, we must consider the audience for Mauropous' letters and orations. This is, at least, a two-dimensional problem, since there was, presumably, an immediate use of these writings before an

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64   *Vat.Gr.676.* ep. 1:1–2.
65   On Mauropous' editorial work, see Floris Bernard, *Writing and reading Byzantine secular poetry 1025–1081,* (Oxford 2014), pp. 128–148.
66   *Vat.Gr.676.* or.184, pp. 160–165.
67   *Menander Rhetor,* p. 32.
68   *Menander Rhetor,* p. 31–32

audience (i.e. the patriarch or the people of Euchaita), as well as a "second-hand" audience (i.e. the readers of his collection as a whole). The two distinct lives of this one text – the written and the performed one – probably mediated a different message.[69] We cannot know what the original letter looked like, but if it was anything like the preserved copy, the patriarch must have read his correspondent's discontent through the lines, clearly understanding Mauropous' plea. Whether he detected all the rhetorical wordplays, or recognized a specified type of speech in it (if it was even intended for him to understand), we can only guess. When it comes to the people of Euchaita and their interpretation of Mauropous' arrival speech, the careful phrasing and frequent abstract metaphors might suggest that he was in no position to play openly with such "paradoxical" constructions. People were nevertheless fairly educated even beyond Constantinople. Elementary schools existed all around the periphery and, most importantly, since rhetoric was a crucial part of Byzantine culture, even provincial crowds could have been exposed to oratory, so they could have recognized if an *encomion* did not sound like it was supposed to.[70] Mauropous was thus in no position to eschew the expected glorification of nature, its products or the city's landmarks. He could (and perhaps did) make subtle allusions through the choice of his subjects and themes, and through some stylistic turns. But a very important factor to be considered in the case of the delivery is the actual audial and performative quality.[71] Good speakers were able to breathe new life to orations and the harmony of sound in every speech played a crucial role. As for the readers of his collection, they were given two parallel accounts to compare. For the perceptive intellectual who lived in the age of autobiographical revival in Byzantine literature, that was quite enough. He could sort out the rest.

Finally, when we take into account the meticulousness that marks Mauropous' entire collection, it seems somewhat more likely that the author intentionally edited and placed the letter to the patriarch as a counterpoint to his

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69   Emmanuel Bourbouhakis, "Rhetoric and Performance in Byzantium", p. 176.

70   Robert Browning, "Literacy in Byzantine World," in *History, Language and Literature in the Byzantine World*, ed. Robert Browning (Northampton 1989), p. 48; Robert Browning begins his paper with an interesting observation about a remark Nicephoros Gregoras made, when he called patriarch Athanasios I illiterate, even though the latter was far from uneducated. If such educational stratification was standard among Byzantine writers and intellectuals, we could hypothesise that the level of addressee/specatator/reader might influence the complexity of the rhetorical figures deployed. On the type of education Constantinople provided in the 11th century: Athanasios Markopoulos, "De la structure de l'école byzantine. Le maître, les livres et le processus éducatif" in *Lire et écrire à Byzance*, ed. Brigitte Mondrain, (Paris 2006), pp. 85–96.

71   Emmanuel Bourbouhakis, "Rhetoric and Performance in Byzantium," p. 186.

inaugural address.[72] Mauropous' collection of works is full of carefully measured words and thoroughly elaborated professorial advice on reading. In his manuscript, one counts 24 verses per page.[73] In all 99 epigrams from his collection Mauropous numbered the letters in precise sequence and wrote elsewhere at length on the need to carefully track divisional particles[74] and on the importance of thorough reading of a given collection.[75] All this is why his metaphors, apparent inconsistencies and occasional vagueness mustn't be rejected as plain, ornamentally "rhetorical" elements. Recent work has made it possible to confidently affirm that the Byzantines paid close attention to the process of writing and compiling collections of their works. Ioannes Mauropous appears to confirm this notion. It thus seems fitting to conclude with a word of caution and advice, from a literary critic they knew well: "A figure is always most effective when it conceals the very fact of being a figure."[76]

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72 The collection is very small, so it is safe to assume that the selection made was far from random. Perhaps the "arrival" letter reached its current form only upon inclusion within a greater opus. To my knowledge, there is no other letter of exile in the Mid-Byzantine period that holds so many elements from Menander's handbook. Theophilact of Achrida, for example, describes his discontent in a very straight-forward manner (see letters 4, 89 and especially 96 Théophylacte d'Achrida, *Letters,* ed. et trans. Paul Gautier, (Thessalonique, 1986)); When it comes to some other characteristic of the exile letters, like the tendency not to mention names of the place where authors have been exiled to, both Mauropous and Theophylact follow the same pattern [see Margaret Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid,* (Birmingham 1997), pp. 266–277].

73 F. Bernard, *Writing and Reading,* p. 76.

74 *Mauropous,* 17:67–105.

75 On an example about Gregory of Nazianzus, he advises the readers to have in mind both his sermons and his epigrams, since some things could be understood only if all of his works were read as a whole. *Mauropous,* 17:125–130. Kekaumenos also advised that people should not be interrupted when speaking as well as that book should be read from cover to cover. Kekaumenos, *Sovety i rasskazy Kekavmena*, ed. Georgi G. Litavrin (Moscow, 1972), p. 240.

76 Longinus, *On the Sublime,* trans. W. Hamilton Fyfe, rev. Donald Russel, Loeb Classical Library volume 199, (London, 1995), p. 231.

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Reappraising the Arabic Accounts for the Conflict of 446/1054–5

An Egyptian Perspective on Constantine IX and His Immediate Successors

Mathew Barber

From the moment that they had established their caliphate in 297/910, the Fatimids engaged in often peaceful exchange with the Byzantines.[1] This exchange, however, came to an abrupt halt in the mid-11th century, when the Seljuks reached the Islamic world and began to exchange embassies with the Byzantines, undermining the Fatimids' privileged diplomatic position. It was also a volatile period at the Byzantine centre. The emperor Constantine IX Monomachos died in 446/1055, and was succeeded by Theodora, the last of the Macedonian dynasty. She was succeeded by Michael VI in 448/1056, who was then overthrown in Isaac Komnenos's 449/1057 coup. The present chapter will focus on the Arabic sources for diplomacy and conflict between the Fatimids and Byzantines in this period. At first glance, therefore, this chapter addresses the movement of people – diplomats and soldiers – across the frontier not ideas. In fact, the texts presented in this chapter will shed light on issues such as: how Byzantium maintained and managed its diplomatic relationships; and in what contexts people and goods crossed the frontier with Egypt and Syria.

However, the historian must first understand the limitations of their source material. This chapter will, therefore, focus on the movement of ideas about Byzantium into Egypt, and how such ideas were reused and transmitted in the later Egyptian historiography. Primarily this will reveal just how well-informed Egyptian historiography was about the Byzantine-Fatimid relationship and the Byzantines. However, it also promises to provide unique insights into a turbulent period of Byzantine history. This is an essential study, as our source material for this period is particularly poor. Greek sources rarely refer to the diplomatic exchanges with Egypt. Moreover, the period between the death of Constantine IX Monomarchus and the coup of Isaac Comnenus remains poorly understood.

The best sources for Byzantine-Fatimid relations are late-Egyptian, dating from after 648/1250 (usually termed Mamluk sources). The present chapter will examine the circulation of the narratives surrounding one event: the Fatimid-Byzantine conflict of 446/1054–5, which broke out around Latakia and Antioch. This event has been noted by various historians, but the huge variation in accounts surrounding the event has yet to be effectively addressed. The first part of this chapter will explore the transmission and circulation of texts within Egypt and attempt to identify the types of sources to which the late Egyptian historians had access. The second part will then use this understanding of the sources to make tentative conclusions about how well-acquainted Egyptian scholarship was with Byzantine politics and dynastic change in this period.

1   The Conflict of 446/1054–5 in Context

The foreign policy of Constantine IX and his immediate successors continues to be defined by the Seljuks' arrival into the near east. Although the Byzantines' major defeat came in 463/1071 at the battle of Manzikert, historians have traced the threat back to Constantine's reign. In the late 1040s and early 1050s raids were directed into Armenia and Iberia by Qutlumush and Ibrahim Inal, relatives of the Seljuk Sultan Tughril. Tughril even led raids of his own towards Kars and Manzikert.[2] George Finlay was among the first to stress how Constantine's reign saw the emergence of the Normans and Seljuks. Constantine focussed on his fight against the Pechenegs in the north, and in doing so neglected his duties in the east. He demobilized the eastern armies and occupied Ani (436–7/1045), the outcome of which was the disintegration of the Armenian Bagratid kingdom, a defensive buffer state for the Byzantine east.[3] Historians have continued to adopt this model for Constantine's reign, albeit with small additions and changes.[4]

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2   Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, Calif, 1997), pp. 592–594; Paul A. Blaum, "Diplomacy Gone to Seed: A history of Byzantine Foreign Relations A.D. 1047–57," *The International Journal of Kurdish Studies*, 18 (2004), 8–14 and 30–36; Anthony Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood: the Rise and Fall of Byzantium, 955 A.D. to the First Crusade* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 196–198.

3   George Finlay, *History of the Byzantine empire, from DCCXVI to MLVII* (Edinburgh, 1853), pp. 511–524.

4   Alexander Alexandrovich Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire, 324–1452*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1952), pp. 313–315 and 355; Romilly Jenkins, *The Byzantine Empire on the Eve of the Crusades* (London, 1966), pp. 333–334; Georgije Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. Joan Hussey (Oxford, 1968), pp. 294–295; Treadgold, *Byzantine State*, pp. 592–596; Judith Herrin, *Byzantium: the Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire* (London, 2007), pp. 220–221. Angold,

The above impression is one available from the Greek and Latin sources. But recently scholarly contributions (notably, Blaum, Kaldellis and Beihammer) have shown how Arabic sources (especially Ibn al-Athīr[5]) confirm the narrative.[6] Details of Byzantine-Fatimid relations are less clear from the Greek material. For example, during Constantine IX's reign Michael Psellos refers only to Constantine's unnecessarily cordial relations with the Fatimids, while Michael Attaleiates and John Skylitzes cite the gift of an elephant and giraffe sent from Egypt.[7] Historians have therefore discussed the relationship in the tenth and early-eleventh centuries through the Arabic corpus. Particular emphasis has been placed on the numerous truces between the two parties,[8] which Jonathan Shepard argues were economically beneficial for the Byzantines.[9] Historians also stress the importance of the Mirdāsid client-state in Aleppo.[10]

Blaum and Kaldellis have been less critical of Constantine, Michael Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1204: A Political History*, 2nd ed. (London, 1997), pp. 46–47; Blaum, "Diplomacy," pp. 1–4; Kaldellis, *Streams*, p. 209. Most recently, Beihammer has engaged critically with this narrative: A.D. Beihammer, *Byzantium and the Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia, ca. 1040–1130* (Abingdon, 2017), pp. 6–10.

5 Ibn al-Athīr, *The annals of the Saljuq Turks: selections from al-Kāmil fi'l-Ta'rīkh of 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr*, trans. D.S. Richards (London, 2002).

6 A comprehensive early study was undertaken in: *Claude Cahen,* "La première pênétration turque en Asie Mineure. (Seconde moitié du XIe s.)," *Byzantion*, 18 (1948), pp. 5–67.

7 Michael Psellos, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers: The Chronographia of Michael Psellus*, trans. E.R.A. Sewter (Harmondsworth, 1966), p. 253; John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057: Translation and Notes*, trans. John Wortley (Cambridge, 2010), p. 442; Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis and Dimitris Krallis (Cambridge, Mass, 2012), p. 89.

8 For an Arabic account of an early embassy: Samuel M. Stern, "An Embassy of the Byzantine Emperor to the Fatimid Caliph Al Mu'izz," *Byzantion*, 20 (1950), pp. 239–258. For other truces see, for example: Vasiliev, *Byzantine Empire*, p. 312; Wesam Farag, "The Aleppo Question: a Byzantine-Fatimid Conflict of Interests in Northern Syria in the later 10th century," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies,* 14(1990), p. 58; Alexander D. Beihammer, "Muslim Rulers Visiting the Imperial City: Building Alliances and Personal Networks between Constantinople and the Eastern Borderlands (Fourth/Tenth-Fifth/Eleventh Century)," *Al-Masaq*, 24 (2012), p. 164.

9 Jonathan Shepard, "Holy Lands, Lost lands, Realpolitik. Imperial Byzantine thinking about Syria and Palestine in the later 10th and 11th centuries," *Al-Qantara: Revista de Estudios Arabes,* 33 (2013), p. 536.

10 Cappel has discussed at length strategies used in the eleventh-century to ally with Arab tribes in Northern Syria, Andrew Cappel, "The Byzantine Response to the 'Arab, (10th to 11th Centuries)," *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 20 (1994), pp. 113–132; see also, Finlay, *Byzantine Empire*, pp. 472–475 and p. 486; Farag, "The Aleppo Question"; Hugh Kennedy, "Byzantine-Arab Diplomacy in the Near East from the Islamic Conquests to the Mid Eleventh Century," in *Byzantine Diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990,* eds. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin,

It is argued that the Byzantines briefly abandoned their alliance with the Fatimids around the reign of Theodora. This is seen through two episodes, the accounts of which survive only in Arabic texts. The first concerns the change of the sermon in the Constantinople mosque. Historians broadly agree upon the details of this first episode, and this is because the available primary sources are also largely in agreement.[11] The broad narrative is as follows: in 447/1055–6 the Seljuk Sultan Tughril sent an envoy to Constantinople, who had asked the empress to pray in the mosque there.[12] Theodora permitted him, and there he gave the sermon in the name of Tughril and the Abbasid Caliph. A Fatimid envoy was in attendance at the mosque, and he duly informed his masters. The Fatimids were insulted; the sermon in the mosque was to be given in the name of the Fatimid Caliph al-Mustanṣir. Thus, it is argued, the Fatimid-Byzantine alliance was abandoned in favour of the Seljuks.

The exact details of the second episode are much less clear, and it thus forms the subject of this chapter. For the purposes of simplicity, the episode is termed the Fatimid-Byzantine Conflict of 446/1054–5. There are some basic elements upon which historians agree: that the dispute came about as a result of a Famine in Egypt and the Byzantines' reneging on their promise to dispatch aid; and that in response the Fatimids sent a commander, Ibn Mulhim, to the frontier, who reached as far as Antioch before being captured. There are six subtly different accounts of the narrative in Arabic, and I would argue that

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(Aldershot, 1992), pp. 142–143; Treadgold, *Byzantine State*, pp. 583–585; Beihammer, "Muslim Rulers," pp. 164–172; Shepard, "Holy lands," pp. 516–520.

11   Gaston Wiet, *L'Egypt Arabe de la Conquete Arabe a la Conquete Ottomane 642–1517 de L'ere Chretienne, vol 4 of* Gabriel Hanotaux, *Histoire de la Nation Egyptienne* (Paris, 1937), p. 230; Marius Canard, "Les Relations Politiques et Sociales entre Byzance et les Arabes," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* 18 (1964), p. 39; Wolfgang Felix, *Byzanz und die islamische Welt im früheren 11. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 1981), p. 121; Michael Angold, *Byzantine Empire,* p. 41; H. Halm. *Die Kalifen von Kairo: Die Fatimiden in Ägypten 973–1074* (Munich, 2003), p. 382; Nadia Maria el-Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Cambridge, Mass, 2004), p. 164; Kirsten Thomson, "Relations between the Fatimids and Byzantine empires during the Reign of the Caliph Al-Mustanṣir Bi'llah 1036–1094/427–487," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies,* 32 (2008), p. 58; Kirsten Thomson, *Politics and Power in Late Fāṭimid Egypt The Reign of Caliph al-Mustanṣir* (London, 2016), p. 116; Nicolas Drocourt, "Passing on Political Information between Major Powers: The Key Role of Ambassadors between Byzantium and Some of its Neighbours," *al-Masaq,* 24(2012), pp. 103–104; Michael Brett, *The Fatimid Empire* (Edinburgh, 2017), p. 193; Beihammer, *Emergence,* p. 94; Beihammer, "Muslim Rulers," p. 171. Blaum adds that Theodora despatched an embassy to Baghdad: Blaum, "Diplomacy," pp. 40–41.

12   According to al-Mu'ayyad, a contemporary Fatimid missionary, the Seljuks courted the Byzantines against the Fatimids in 446/1054–5 but, Blaum argues, the embassy did not arrive until Theodora's reign: Blaum, "Diplomacy," p. 37.

these fall into two broad types. Hitherto, most studies of the episode have attempted to arrange these accounts into a positivist historical narrative.[13] Beihammer's most recent scholarly treatment of the episode does, however, acknowledge that there are two types of account and that this creates difficulties in particular for dating the beginning of the dispute (Halm also notes the difference but relegates it to a footnote).[14] Nonetheless, there has yet to be an effective explanation of the crucial differences between the accounts, or a consideration of why this detailed narrative only survives in a limited set of late Arabic sources. The present chapter, therefore, will present all six variants before attempting to explain the differences between them.

2 The Fatimid-Byzantine Conflict of 446/1054–5: Two Types of Account

Of the six variants, one is given by Ibn Muyassar (d. 677/1278), and five by al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442). The earliest is in Ibn Muyassar's *Akhbār*, which is the shortest and least detailed.[15] Of al-Maqrīzī's: one is in his *khiṭaṭ*,[16] two under two consecutive years (446/1054–5 and 447/1055–6) of his *ittiʿāẓ*,[17] and two more in his *muqaffā* (one in the biography of the Fatimid vizier al-Yāzūrī, and the other in the biography of Ibn al-Mulhim).[18]

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13   Wiet, *L'Egypt*, p. 230; Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 119–120; Thierry Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie sous la domination Fatimide (349–468/969–1076) Tome premier* (Damascus, 1986), pp. 566–568; Franz Dölger and Peter Wirth, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453*, 2, (Munich, 1995), p. 32; Thomson, "Relations," p. 58; Thomson, *Politics and power,* p. 116; Brett, *Fatimid empire,* pp. 192–193. The event is discussed more briefly in: David Jacoby, "Byzantine Trade with Egypt from the Mid-Tenth Century to the Fourth Crusade.," *Thesaurismata*, 30 (2000); Reprinted in: David Jacoby, *Commercial Exchange across the Mediterranean: Byzantium, the Crusader Levant, Egypt and Italy*, (Aldershot, 2005), p. 46; Blaum, "Diplomacy," p. 41–42; Kaldellis, *streams*, p. 215. Angold only refers to the proposed gift of grain: Angold, *Byzantine Empire*, p. 47.
14   Beihammer, *Emergence*, pp. 100–101; Halm appears to be the only scholar to have utilised the *muqaffā*'s version of the narrative: Halm, *Kalifen*, pp. 381–382 (for the discussion of source discrepancies see n. 112).
15   Ibn Muyassar, *al-Muntaqā min Akhbār miṣr*, ed. Ayman Fuʾād Sayyid (Cairo, 2014), p. 16.
16   al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiz wa-l-ʿitibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-l-āthār*, 2, ed. Ayman Fuʾād Sayyid, (London, 2002), p. 135.
17   al-Maqrīzī, *ittiʿāẓ al-ḥunafā bi-akhbār al-ʾimmah al-Fāṭimīyyīn al-khulafā*, 2, ed. Muḥammad Ḥilmī Muḥammad Aḥmad, (Cairo, 2008), pp. 227–229 and 230–231.
18   al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Muqaffa al-kabīr*, 3, ed. Muḥammad al-Yaʿlāwī, (Beirut, 1987), pp. 383–384, 387–389 and 425–426.

These two Egyptian historians appear to be interested in the account for its relevance to Fatimid history. As noted above, the events of this decade were seen as a pivotal for Fatimid-Byzantine relations. All of the works are histories that focus on Egypt: Ibn Muyassar's *akhbār* is an annalistic chronicle of Egyptian history; al-Maqrīzī's *khiṭaṭ* is a topographical history of Egypt; his *ittiʿāẓ* is a detailed annalistic history of the Fatimid dynasty; finally, his *muqaffā* is a biographical dictionary of Egyptian figures, where al-Yāzūrī and Ibn Mulhim are key Fatimid protagonists. Ibn Muyassar and al-Maqrīzī were Egyptian scholars, and thus their histories are best seen as exercises in exploring the Egyptian past, in which the Fatimids and their military and diplomatic relations figured centrally. In composing these histories, they appear to copy or paraphrase material of a much earlier, often potentially Fatimid, origin.

At such a chronological distance, it is impossible to discern the exact manner in which ideas about Byzantium reached our authors, but some basic trends can be identified. Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, a 12th-century head of the Fatimid bureau of correspondence, stressed the importance of recording "the titles of distant kings, and messengers from afar, their names, and the order in which they are summoned [i.e. their rank]" in a "ledger [*daftar*]" that should be regularly updated. He also referred to the keeping of a "ledger of great events, and their outcomes, which have come to pass in every kingdom."[19] Such ledgers doubtless concerned Byzantium, given that Ibn al-Ṣayrafī elsewhere mentions the need to deal with correspondence in "Roman script [*al-khaṭṭ al-rūmī*]" (Which should be taken to mean Greek, not Latin, as he distinguishes it from "Frankish script [*al-khaṭṭ al-faranjī*]").[20] Such information was probably collected by Fatimid envoys and spies in Constantinople, or documented from Byzantine envoys or letters sent to Cairo. In addition, data was possibly collected on the frontier by Fatimid military and civil personnel.

As noted above, the accounts of the conflict fall into two types, which potentially reflect the different ways in which information about the Byzantines had reached Egypt. Type 1 accounts appear to contain more military details and ignore the negotiations. As such, parts of these accounts probably originated from frontier observations. Type 1 accounts are provided by Ibn Muyassar, and then repeated by al-Maqrīzī in two places. Type 2 accounts contain a more court-based perspective with a greater focus on how diplomacy was mixed with military activity. The information in this type of account was perhaps collected in the court, potentially using the ledgers to which Ibn al-Ṣayrafī refers. Type 2 accounts are found in three of al-Maqrīzī's works, and there is

19   Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *al-Qānūn fī dīwān al-rasāʾil*, ed. ʿAlī Bahjat (Cairo, 1905), pp. 138–139.
20   Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *al-Qānūn*, p. 140.

very little variation between them, suggesting they are using a common source with a court-based perspective.

2.1   *Type 1 Accounts*

There is significant variation between type 1 accounts. The *itti'āẓ* variant is the most detailed of the three, and is perhaps closer to the parent narrative. Ibn Muyassar provides the earliest type 1 account, to which al-Maqrīzī's variant in the *khiṭaṭ* is similar. Below a full translation from Ibn Muyassar will be given with comparison to the *khiṭaṭ*. Text in italics indicate parts of the text given verbatim in the *khiṭaṭ*; the other parts of the text are retained in the *khiṭaṭ*, but with lexical variations (significant deviations will be outlined in the notes). Material unique to Ibn Muyassar is noted in bold:

> In this year [446/1054–5] an epidemic and famine occurred in Egypt. Al-Mustanṣir asked the Master of Constantinople[21] to carry grain from his country. *He sent to him four hundred thousand* ardabb. He [the Master of Constantinople] died while he was doing that[22] and a woman ruled after him. She messaged al-Mustanṣir to [ask him to] help her if anyone rebelled against her, but he did not agree and she withheld the grain from him.[23] Al-Mustanṣir prepared an army, led by Makīn al-Dawla al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Mulhim, to head for Latakia. **He went out with multiple armies** and *made siege to it [the city] because of the breaking of the truce and the seizure of the grain* **that had come from Constantinople.**[24] He [al-Mustanṣir] added a second army and a third army, and a summons was made to all the territories of the Levant [for them] to raid Byzantium [*bilād al-rūm*].[25]
>
>   Ibn Mulhim **made siege to Qasṭayūn**, near Apamea, and held its people under a blockade.[26] **Then he left them after they had asked to [be permitted] to leave it [the town, peacefully] once he [Ibn Mulhim] had left, and they fulfilled their promise.** *He then roamed around in the*

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21   *Khiṭaṭ* instead uses "the Byzantine pretender [*mutamallik al-rūm*]."

22   *Khiṭaṭ*: "He intended to transport it [the grain] to Egypt, [but] death overtook him and he died before that."

23   *Khiṭaṭ*: "She wrote to al-Mustanṣir asking him to be her assistant and to reinforce her with Egyptian armies, if anyone rebelled against her. [But] he refused to help her with her request. She was angry at that, so she prevented the passage of grain to Egypt."

24   *Khiṭaṭ*: "and preventing the grain from reaching Egypt."

25   *Khiṭaṭ*: "He reinforced them [the initial forces] with many armies and summons were made to the Levant [for them] to raid."

26   *Khiṭaṭ*: "Ibn Mulhim stopped near Apamea and harassed its people."

> *provinces of Antioch.* He plundered there and took many prisoners from there. The Queen of Constantinople[27] heard this and sent eighty ships by sea.[28] She captured Ibn Mulhim, and those **Arab nobles that were with him**[29] when two nights remained of the *month Rabīʿ* II [August 1054].[30]

The variations in the *khiṭaṭ* appear to largely be abbreviations of that provided by Ibn Muyassar – this is seen in particular with the omissions noted in bold. There are, however, a few cases where the *khiṭaṭ* is more detailed (see, in particular, notes 22 and 23). Put together, this suggests that each of these variations is perhaps an independent abbreviation of an earlier text, rather than the *khiṭaṭ* being simply dependent on the earlier Ibn Muyassar. More significant, however, is the change from queen (*malika*) to the masculine master (*ṣāhib*), suggesting that a man had dispatched the navy (note 27) – this would accord with al-Maqrīzī's type 2 accounts, and he might have edited the text here. Nonetheless, both accounts agree that the Byzantine emperor had been succeeded by a woman.

In his *ittiʿāẓ* al-Maqrīzī provides a more detailed variant on the second paragraph of the above account, which confirms Theodora's role in dispatching the navy. Al-Maqrīzī begins the account by noting that Ibn Mulhim was sent out from Cairo in the year 447/1055–6. Then, after discussing the politics of the Kalbid family (to which Ibn Mulhim belonged), al-Maqrīzī continued:

> Ibn Mulhim stopped at Apamea. Then he came to the fortress of Qusṭūl and he made siege to it for twenty days until he took it by treaty [*bi-amān*] on the eighth of Rabīʿ I [4]47. He returned to Apamea, made siege to it and assaulted it with mangonels. They requested a treaty [*amān*] stipulating that he would leave them. When he left they burned the fortress and fled. So he caught up with them, killed them, and had the fire in the fortress extinguished. He raided the country, and there was no one in Antioch a to defend it. All those who wanted to plunder gathered together under the authority of Ibn Mulhim. Thimāl b. Sāliḥ [the ruler of Aleppo] mediated for peace, but it was not concluded.
>
> Queen Tuyūdūrā [Theodora] dispatched a fleet to Antioch, and eighty ships arrived at Latakia. The Duke [*Dūqas*] of Antioch, its patriarch and a

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27   *Khiṭaṭ*: "The master of Constantinople [*ṣāḥib al-Qusṭanṭīniyya*]." Note the use of masculine here, potentially indicating a change in ruler.

28   *Khiṭaṭ* adds: "and Ibn Mulhim fought them [the ships] a number of times."

29   *Khiṭaṭ*: "and a big group."

30   Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār*, p. 16; al-Maqrīzī, *khiṭaṭ*, p. 135.

group [of people] left. They caught two warships [*shīnī*[31]] belonging to the Muslims, carrying booty. Ibn Mulhim went towards them [the group that fled Antioch] and the Byzantines [*al-rūm*] fled to the border of Antioch. He [Ibn Mulhim] rescued the prisoners [of war] from them, and killed a great number of them [the enemy]. The fleet turned to Tripoli and fought its people, and people were killed on both sides. The Byzantine fleet [*al-usṭul al-rūmī*] returned to Latakia. Queen Tuyūdūrā [Theodora] died after seven years, nine months and twelve days of rule, and Mīkhāʾīl ruled after her.[32]

This final variant perhaps better reflects the main parent account upon which the variants of Ibn Muyassar's and the *khiṭaṭ* are based, building on their vague narrative of events. For example, Ibn Muyassar describes how following the fighting around a place called Qasṭayūn (Qusṭūl in the *ittiʿāẓ* variant), Ibn Mulhim left the people alone on the promise that they gave up their town. Meanwhile, the *ittiʿāẓ* variant explains Ibn Mulhim's dealings with the inhabitants in much greater detail, noting their disobedience and attempt to burn the fortress (to render the town indefensible). Similar is seen in the case of the empress's dispatch of the navy. Ibn Muyassar notes that the navy was dispatched and Ibn Mulhim was captured, and the *khiṭaṭ* adds that Ibn Mulhim fought the navy (note 28). The *ittiʿāẓ* description of the capture of two Muslim ships, confirms the Fatimids had dispatched their own navy, and explains the *khiṭaṭ*'s claims.[33] However, this variant does not refer to the capture of Ibn Mulhim, instead concluding with Theodora's death. As such, this final more-detailed anecdote reads as a detailed fragment from a much larger tradition.

2.2   *Type 2 Accounts*

That al-Maqrīzī skips the start of the campaign in the *ittiʿāẓ* variant cited above, is clearly because he had already detailed these events in the previous year (446/1054–5). However, the 446/1054–5 description focusses not on Ibn Mulhim, but Fatimid-Byzantine diplomacy. Type 2 accounts are the most detailed, and unlike with type 1 accounts, there is very little variation between them. A full translation here is provided from the *ittiʿāẓ* and compared with the variant in biography of al-Yāzūrī from the *muqaffā*. The third variant, given

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31   For classifications of the Fatimid navy, see: Yacoov Lev, "The Fatimid Navy, Byzantium and the Mediterranean Sea 909–1036 C.E./297–427 A.H." *Byzantion*, 54(1984), p. 247.

32   Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, 2:231.

33   This would accord with the pattern of Fatimid fighting on this frontier, launching a land attack supported and supplied by the navy. See Lev "Navy," pp. 242–243.

in the biography of Ibn Mulhim is not outlined, as it is a heavily paraphrased version of the account given below. Passages found verbatim in the biography of al-Yāzūrī are in italics, and significant differences are given in the footnotes. Information that is unique to the *ittiʿāẓ* is in bold:

> When a treaty was settled with Constantine[34] king of the Romans, during the days of *the vizierate of Abū Naṣr al-Falāḥī* [r. 436/1044–5–440/1048–9], *two messengers* arrived.[35] *One of them*[36] *was the spokesman* **and transla-tor**. *He was shrewd, well-bred, a poet, a grammarian, and a philosopher.*[37] *He was born in Byzantium,*[38] *and grew up in Antioch*. He entered Iraq, and learned the sciences and *adab*[39] so much that his reputation travelled far.[40] He was known as Ibn Iṣṭafānūs.
>
> *The other* was the bearer of the gift, and he *was a commander* [ṣāḥib al-ḥarb] *known as Mīkhāʾīl*. They saw [in Egypt] the excellent shape of the [Fatimid] state and its beautiful "way of life". They were amazed at that, especially Mīkhāʾīl, who was pleased with what he saw and it left a good impression on him. They left, and their hearts were full of love for what they saw. The king of Byzantium [then] died [*ittafaqa*][41] and this Mīkhāʾīl was made king.[42]
>
> He[43] *was informed of the*[44] *inflation* [of grain prices, dated by al-Maqrīzī to 446/1054–5] *in Egypt*.[45] So *he transported 100,000* qafīz of grain to there

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34   *Muqaffā*: "with Byzantium," Constantine is omitted.

35   *Muqaffā*: "from their side [*min qibalihim*]."

36   *Muqaffā* adds here: "known as Ibn Iṣṭafānūs."

37   *Muqaffā*: "and keen-eyed."

38   Lit. *ittīʿāẓ*: "Rome [*bi-l-rūm*]"; *muqaffā*: "territory of Rome [*bi-bilād al-rūm*]."

39   That is, he learned sciences in the Classical Islamic sense (meaning also subjects such as theology), alongside the literary arts.

40   Although the meaning of the *ittīʿāẓ* and *muqaffā* is the same here, the language is entirely different.

41   Al-Maqrīzī's rendition in the *ittīʿāẓ* here clearly contains a copying error. Al-Maqrīzī's *it-tafaqa malik al-rūm* should be read *ittifaqa mawt malik al-Rūm* (lit. the death of the king of Byzantium happened). This reading is confirmed by the variant in the *muqaffā*, see note 42 below.

42   The *Muqaffā* conveys similar, but with notable differences: "That filled him with delight, and he was excellent and rational. So when the two returned to their country, the fates decreed that the Byzantine pretender [*mutamallik*] would die, and this Michael was made king after him. He ruled the kingdom for around five years."

43   *Muqaffā*: "Mīkhāʾīl, the Byzantine pretender was informed."

44   *Muqaffā*: "the aforementioned inflation."

45   *Muqaffā* adds: "He thought that, because of the extent of his love for the [Fatimid] state, he would transport…"

[Egypt].[46] *His letter arrived* **ahead of it [*amāmahā*]** *itemising the grain and the measure [of it] which [would] be received* when it arrived. It [the grain] reached Antioch,[47] *and he prepared the gift of the truce*, as was customary,[48] *and a gift of his money. When the Byzantines saw that, they thought he had an inclination towards Islam*, so *they killed him*, **on the eighth of Shawwāl [446/ 10th January 1055], and the length of his reign was twelve years and seven months. He was 54 years and a month old.** *They raised*[49] *a man known as Ibn Saqlārūs, from Antioch* [min ahli Anṭākiyya]. He was unyielding, evil and sharp.[50] So he obstructed the [dispatch of] the two gifts, seized them [*akhadhahumā*],[51] and said: 'I **will make use of them**, and *expend the cost of the two on fighting the Muslims.'*

The vizier [al-Yāzūrī] had spies in Constantinople, and *they wrote to him about that. So he sent Makīn al-Dawla,* **al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī** *b. Mulhim* **al-Kutāmī** *to Latakia with an army* to make siege to it,[52] **and harass those in it.**[53] So he put it [the city] under siege until matters worsened for those in it.[54] So Ibn Saqlārūs, **the Byzantine pretender**, wrote to his highness[55] *asking him to explain what had necessitated that* [*attack on Latakia*]. He replied[56] that it was necessitated by that which *he had done, breaking the treaty that had been agreed with his predecessors, and seizing the gift* **and the gift that was not of his money.**

He replied that he would convey the gift, [but] on the condition that he [al-Mustanṣir] released[57] **Byzantine** *prisoners in his territory. So [al-Mustanṣir] replied that if he released those Byzantine prisoners they had in the territory of Islam*, he [Ibn Saqlārūs] should release the Muslim prisoners in Byzantine territories.[58]

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46   *Muqaffā*: "to Cairo."

47   *Muqaffā*: "He sent it to Antioch."

48   Here the *Muqaffā* appears to abridge the account: *ittiʿāẓ*: "ʿalā mā jarat bi-hi al-ʿāda"; *Muqaffā*: "ʿala al-ʿāda"

49   *Muqaffā* adds: "after him."

50   *Muqaffā*: "He was harsh, unyielding and evil in nature."

51   *Muqaffā* simply: "He seized [*qabaḍa*] the two gifts."

52   *Muqaffā*: "he came to it [Latakia] and made siege to it."

53   *Muqaffā*: "and a call was made in Greater Syria to fight the Byzantines."

54   *Muqaffā*: "When matters worsened for the people of Latakia, they informed Ibn Saqlārūs of what had happened to them."

55   *Muqaffā*: "al-Mustanṣir."

56   *Muqaffā*: "he wrote to him."

57   *Muqaffā*: "all prisoners"

58   *Muqaffā*: "he should release the Muslims in his possession."

He [Ibn Saqlārūs] replied that it was not right to ask for that, because *prisoners from Byzantium were divided between kingdoms in Iraq, the Fatimid state, the Maghrib, Yemen, and elsewhere. His highness had no authority over all of these kingdoms, so that he could [not] be asked to return what was in the hands of their people. In Byzantine territory it was otherwise. Muslims that were there were like [people] imprisoned in one 'house' and could not leave without* the permission of its community.[59] *Between the two situations there was a big difference.*

So he [Ibn Saqlārūs] replied that he would not release the prisoners of the Muslims in his country. Then it was given as a condition that he [Ibn Saqlārūs] returned those Muslim fortifications that had come to be in Byzantine hands. [Ibn Saqlārūs] refused that and said: 'When those Byzantine fortifications that have come to be in Muslim hands, are surrendered to us, the Muslims' fortifications in our [lit. their] hands will be surrendered.'

He [al-Yāzūrī] substituted[60] *the army with another army.* It left with its commander[61] al-Amīr al-Saʿīd Layth al-Dawla. He fought in Latakia until he captured it, and **violence occurred in it** [the city]. [*Meanwhile*] *the reply was made*[62] *that it was not correct to surrender to* them [the Byzantines] *the fortresses in Muslim hands, because they had built* inalienable properties[63] *there and established gardens there.*[64]

He said: they would be paid for their properties,[65] **and for the gardens that they had established and other [things] and for what they had expended there.** And they would be transported from there to other [places] in Muslim territory. So they agreed[66] that they would surrender *what Muslim fortresses were in their possession.*

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59 *Muqaffā*: "without their decree."

60 *Muqaffā*: "al-Yāzūrī reinforced."

61 *Muqaffā*: "it was commanded by."

62 *Muqaffā*: "to Ibn Saqlārūs."

63 *Muqaffā*: "properties"; this might perhaps be an error: the Arabic for "inalienable properties" is *ʿaqārāt* as compared to *ʿamārāt* for properties. Thus, were the consonantal diacritics to be removed from the *qāf* of the former, the letter would become *mīm*, and the latter word would be the result.

64 *Muqaffā* adds: "So it was not proper to surrender [the fortresses] to him, for the Muslims there would become *dhimmī*s."

65 The variant in the *Muqaffā* confirms that the verb *dafaʿa* should be read as "to pay," rather than "to force out/ to move": "He replied that he would pay to them the price of their properties."

66 *Muqaffā*: "then they agreed."

It was the custom that when a gift arrived from Byzantium **to his highness** *it*[*s value*] *would be assessed,*[67] *and they would convey to them a gift* that was two-thirds of the value of [the original gift], so that a third would come to Islam. It was made a condition[68] that *the value of the gift that the* [*Fatimids*] *sent to them in exchange for the value of their gift, should be half.*[69] They also agreed to that.

It was made a condition upon them [the Byzantines] that they returned [the taxes of][70] *all of those gathered by the house* of the country [*dār al-bilād*], *which is the abode of the king* and his centre.[71] *He* [*Ibn Saqlārūs*] *refused that.* So the army was reinforced with a third army. **Over it were two commanders: Muwaffaq al-Dawla Ḥifāẓ b. Fātik and Abū al-Jaysh ʿAskar b. al-Ḥillī. The** *amīr* **Makīn al-Dawla commanded the whole army and the holder of the office [lit. its custodian] was Ibn Mulhim.**[72] *They penetrated deep into Byzantium, they plundered, killed and took prisoners* until the damage there increased. Messengers and letters went back and forth [*tataraddadu*] until it was agreed to *arrange the* jizya,[73] which **the princes [lit.** *amīr***s] of** the Praetorium **had solicited.**[74] And the gift was prepared. The **aforementioned** *jizya* was estimated at over thirty-thousand *dīnār*s.

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67   *Muqaffā*: "in the treasury."

68   *Muqaffā*: "the vizier made it a condition on Ibn Saqlārūs."

69   *Muqaffā*: "of that."

70   The variant in the *ittīʿāẓ*, omits the word *jizya*, which is found in the *muqaffā,* and it is somewhat misleading (compare with the other variant translated in full in note 71). It might be a read as a return of high-profile Fatimid prisoners in Constantinople, but the following passages in the *ittīʿāẓ*, which refer openly to the return of money, render this reading impossible. As such I have opted to insert tax into the translation here.

71   *Muqaffā*: "The vizier made it a condition that he conveyed to him the *jizya* of all those gathered by the Praetorium [*dār al-Balāṭ*], which is the abode of the king, the centre of his rule, and his place." This passage could be interpreted in two ways: The first, that al-Yāzūrī asked for the Byzantine court to pay a symbolic *jizya*, as a sign of their subjugation to the Fatimids. The second interpretation is that al-Yāzūrī wished to receive back-payments of *jizya* tax for the territories that were being returned by the Byzantines to the Fatimids. For another text, Stern translates *jizya* as "tribute," but here I have kept *jizya* to preserve the connotations of subjugation: Stern, "An Embassy," p. 258. El-Cheikh asserts that *dār al-balāt* should be read as the praetorium: El-Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed*, p. 146.

72   Given that al-Maqrīzī had already mentioned Ibn Mulhim was commander of the initial army and titled Makīn al-Dawla, he might have added this from another account. This is further suggested by the exclusion of this phrase from the variant in the *muqaffā*.

73   *Muqaffā*: "Ibn Saqlārūs sent his letters to submit to arranging the *jizya*."

74   *Muqaffā*: "from the Preatorium."

> *That was conveyed to Antioch*, [when] they heard of the **death** of al-Yāzūrī.[75] *So* [*the gift*/jizya] *was returned to Constantinople. Byzantium* [bilād al-rūm] *was decorated for his death* and they were very happy to be freed from his roughness towards them, **and from his unyieldingness.**
> As for Ibn Mulhim, when he penetrated into Byzantium, approached Apamea, and moved freely in the territories of Antioch, plundering and taking prisoners, ships arrived[76] from Constantinople and they say their number was eighty ships. There were battles between them and Ibn Mulhim which eventually resulted in his capture and [the capture of] a group of Arab notables at the end of Rabīʿ II.[77]

Of the three variants of the type 2 account, the *muqaffā* is the only one that exhibits no clear similarities with the type 1 accounts and it is probably closest to the original source text. The final paragraph of the *ittiʿāẓ* variant, by comparison, appears to be a paraphrase of the type 2 accounts (in places it even shares similar language, see note 76). The biography of Ibn Mulhim, moreover, integrates some material from the type 1 accounts.

There are two parts of the *ittiʿāẓ* variant that are not closely associated with the type 1 or type 2 sources and the exact origins of these unique anecdotes cannot be identified. The first details the length of Mīkhāʾīlī's reign, providing a reign that exactly corresponds to Constantine IX's, as recorded in Greek sources (see further, the discussion below). The second details the names of the commanders involved in the assault on the frontier. Regardless of the origins of these anecdotes, it is clear in both cases that al-Maqrīzī has used them to explain elements of the type 2 account to his readers.

The parent source, of which the biography of al-Yāzūrī appears to preserve the closest copy, is concerned primarily with the role of the court rather than specific military details. This source was clearly important to al-Maqrīzī, as he has appears to have copied from it directly in both the *ittīʿāẓ* and *muqaffā*'s biography of al-Yāzūrī. This is seen in the extensive text in italics above, especially for the sections describing the negotiations. Small additional details in the *ittiʿāẓ* (most clearly, in the addition of a sentence to one of Ibn Saqlārūs's quotations at the end of the third paragraph of the translation, p. 180), suggest

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75   *Muqaffā*: "dismissal of the vizier al-Yāzūrī."

76   Notice from the bold that this is an insertion, probably from a type 1 account. The use of the passive here enables al-Maqrīzī to change the account from "she [Theodora] dispatched ships [*qaddamat qaṭāʾiʿ*]" to "the ships were dispatched [*quddimat qaṭāʾiʿ*]." It might alternatively be read as an active form 1: "the ships arrived [*qadimat qaṭāʾiʿ*]."

77   al-Maqrīzī, *ittiʿāẓ*, 2:227−229; al-Maqrīzī, *muqaffā*, 3:383−384, 387−389.

that the *itti'āẓ* and *muqaffā* are quoting from the same source independently. The *itti'āẓ*, however, paraphrases the original text so heavily in places that the meaning is rendered obscure. See notably, the case of the *jizya* tax, where comparison with the *muqaffā* is needed to gain a clear understanding (notes 70 and 71).

2.3   *The Two Types Compared*

In both types of account, al-Maqrīzī appears to give variants that are more detailed and closer to the parent narrative (the *itti'āẓ* variant in type 1 and al-Yāzūrī's biography in type 2). Type 1 is, however, only preserved in fragments, while we might possess a more complete rendition for type 2. In both cases (especially type 2) al-Maqrīzī shows his willingness to edit and abbreviate. There is also notable variation in the type of content provided in type 1 and type 2 narratives, as seen in the table below. Events highlighted in bold are unique to their type:

TABLE 7.1   Narrative elements of type 1 and type 2 accounts of the conflict of 446/1054–5

		Ibn Muyassar	Al-Maqrīzī				
		Akhbār	Khiṭat	Itti'āẓ– year 447	Itti'āẓ – year 446	Muqaffā– bio of al-Yāzūrī	Muqaffa – bio of Ibn Mulhim
Type 1	**Unnamed emperor dies a natural death**	X	X				
	Theodora or "a woman" succeeds in 447/	X	X				
	Theodora asks Fatimids for help and Fatimids refuse.	X	X				
	Fatimids dispatch Ibn Mulhim, who makes siege to Latakia.	X	X				

| | | Ibn Muyassar | Al-Maqrīzī | | | | |
		Akhbār	Khiṭat	Ittiʿāẓ – year 447	Ittiʿāẓ – year 446	Muqaffa– bio of al-Yāzūrī	Muqaffa – bio of Ibn Mulhim
	Two further armies dispatched, and a summons is made to raid Byzantium	X	X				
	Armies moves from Latakia to Antioch, via Apamea	X	X	X			
	Theodora dispatches fleet.	X	X	X			
	Ibn Mulhim defeated by fleet	X	X		X		X
Type 2	**Embassy sent by the Byzantines with Mīkhāʾīl as an envoy, who later becomes emperor.**				X	X	X
	Emperor Mīkhāʾīl killed in a coup by Ibn Saqlārūs.				X	X	
	Al-Yāzūrī dispatches Ibn Mulhim, who makes siege to Latakia				X	X	X
	Al-Yāzūrī opens negotiations with Ibn Saqlārūs				X	X	X

TABLE 7.1   Narrative elements of type 1 and type 2 accounts of the conflict of 446/1054–5 (*cont.*)

	Ibn Muyassar	Al-Maqrīzī				
	Akhbār	Khiṭat	Itti'āẓ– year 447	Itti'āẓ– year 446	Muqaffa– bio of al-Yāzūrī	Muqaffa – bio of Ibn Mulhim
Second army is sent to Latakia, and the city is captured.				X	X	
Negotiations continue.				X	X	
Condition of jizya is refused, and a third army is dispatched.				X	X	
The combined force raid into Byzantium.				X	X	
Ibn Saqlārūs agrees to the terms.				X	X	
The dismissal/death of al-Yāzūrī means the agreement is not honoured.				X	X	X
A Byzantine fleet is dispatched				X		
Ibn Saqlārūs dispatches a fleet						X
Date that Byzantine navy defeats Ibn Mulhim:	Rabī' II 447	Rabī' II 447	Not given	Rabī' II [No date]	Not given	Rabī' II 450

First a note should be made of what the two types share. Both types acknowledge the promised dispatch of grain, the seizure of the grain, and the military response of the Fatimids (encompassing the dispatch of three separate armies). They, however, disagree on the reasons for the grain's seizure. Type 1 stresses that it was in response to the Fatimids' refusal to help Theodora, where type 2

blames the rebellion of Ibn Saqlārūs. Both agree that the centre of the initial conflict was Latakia, but only type 2 claims the city was captured.[78] By comparison, only type 1 accounts suggest the centre of the later conflict was Antioch (where the type 2 *itti'āẓ* variant mentions Antioch, it is clearly an insertion from type 1). Meanwhile, type 2 accounts provide a more comprehensive framework for the fighting on the frontier, suggesting that each army was dispatched when negotiations reached an impasse. Moreover, in type 2 al-Yāzūrī is named as a key protagonist throughout, where he is entirely excluded from the type 1 variants.[79]

The two types of account also transmit of two different ideas about Byzantine politics in the Egyptian historiography. This is seen most clearly in the dating discrepancy between the two types. It is claimed in type 2 variants that al-Yāzūrī's dismissal or death brought an end to negotiations. This would suggest a date after Muharram 450/February-March 1058.[80] If we were to accept the former date, then Theodora could not have defeated Ibn Mulhim (she died in 448/1056).[81] Al-Maqrīzī appears to be aware of this, and we can see his attempt to integrate the variants in the biography of Ibn Mulhim. There he claims that the Byzantine fleet had been dispatched by Ibn Saqlārūs, and that it defeated Ibn Mulhim in Rabīʿ II 450/June-July 1058. Rather than viewing one account as more useful or trustworthy than the other, we will consider each as a different perspective on the same political events. These perspectives emerged as a result of different patterns of idea transmission, both across the frontier and within Egyptian historiography. Type 1 accounts perhaps rely upon frontier-based observers, where type 2 might rely more heavily on court-based sources. The following sections will explore these two different Egyptian perspectives on Constantine IX's immediate successors.

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78   This is a crucial distinction. Blaum, for example, claims that Ibn Mulhim achieved nothing in Latakia, Blaum, "Diplomacy," p. 41.

79   The prominence of al-Yāzūrī might suggest the account had been written in praise of the vizier. See especially, the assertion that negotiations collapsed because of al-Yāzūrī's death or dismissal. Michael Brett has proposed that in writing the *itti'āẓ*, al-Maqrīzī had made use of a source that praised al-Yāzūrī, see: Michael Brett, "The Execution of Al-Yāzūrī," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras II. Proceedings of the 4th and 5th International Colloquium*, eds. Kristof D'hulster, Jo Van Steenbergen and Urbain Vermeulen, (Leiden, 1998), pp. 15–27.

80   The near-contemporary Ibn al-Ṣayrafī claims al-Yāzūrī was arrested in Muharram 450: Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, "Al-ishāra ilā man nāl al-wizāra, de Amīn al-Dīn Tāj al-Riyyāsa Abī al-Qāsim ʿAlī b. Munjib b. Sulaymān connu sous le nom d'Ibn al-Ṣayrafī al-Miṣrī," ed. Abdullah Mukhlis, *Bulletin de L'instut Français d'archéologie orientale*, 25(1925), p. 68; al-Maqrīzī agrees with this dating in his biography of the vizier: al-Maqrīzī, *muqaffā*, 3:402.

81   Although Beihammer notes the difficulty dating the start of the campaign, he overlooks this (arguably more crucial) problem with the sources. Beihammer, *Emergence*, p. 100.

**3   Al-Maqrīzī's Accounts and Byzantine Politics between
         446/1054–5 and 450/1058–9**

**3.1   *The Traditional View of Byzantine Politics: Constantine IX,
         Theodora and the Type 1 Account***

We must first establish how Arabic historians understood Byzantine politics by
the 15th century. Some historians are aware that Constantine IX had been on
the throne and had died in 1055. Two sources note this, although both mistak-
enly claim that Constantine ruled through marriage to Theodora.[82] The first is
from Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233):

> In this year [446/1054–5] in Shawwāl, Constantine [Qusṭanṭīn] died. He
> was King of Rome, the husband of Theodora [Tidhūra], who was daugh-
> ter of Constantine [VIII] and marked with kingship. This Constantine
> [IX] ruled through his marriage to her.[83]

As part of his remarkably detailed outline of the Byzantine emperors (a chap-
ter in his famous manual for the Mamluk bureau of correspondence), al-
Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418) claims similar:

> [The Byzantines] had Constantine rule over them and they married him
> to Theodora [Nadūra] in the year four hundred and thirty-four [1042–3].
> Then the aforementioned Constantine died in the year 446 [1054–5].[84]

Although both repeat the same error here, there are no lexical similarities and
it is unlikely that al-Qalqashandī has used Ibn al-Athīr (notice in particular the
two variant spellings of Theodora). Although al-Qalqashandī was mistaken
about Theodora's marriage to Constantine, he provides a date for Constan-
tine's succession that agrees with the Greek sources. Al-Maqrīzī, moreover, in
his *itti'āẓ*, also agrees that a Constantine was on the throne during the same
period, referring to exchanges with an emperor Constantine in both the year
443/1051–2 and 444/1052–3.[85]

There is also an awareness here of Theodora's Macedonian heritage. Ibn al-
Athīr states that Theodora was a daughter of Constantine (VIII). Al-Qalqashandī
provides a yet more detailed outline. He notes that a Constantine (VIII) was

82   According to Greek tradition, Theodora famously never married, and following the death
      of Zoe, Constantine IX continued to rule independently.
83   Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-ta'rīkh*, 8, ed. Muhammad Yūsuf al-Duqāq, (Beirut, 1987), p. 319.
84   al-Qalqashandī, *Kitāb ṣubḥ al-'ashà*, 5, no ed. (Cairo, 1918), p. 401.
85   al-Maqrīzī, *itti'āẓ*, 2:214 and 223.

succeeded by three daughters. The eldest of whom (Zoe, unnamed by al-Qalqashandī) was married to Romanos (Armānūs), and then successively to two emperors called Michael. He then notes Michael V's failed attempt to depose her, dated to 433/1041–2. Al-Qalqashandī's summary, while not mentioning Zoe by name, thus provides remarkable detail on the later Macedonian dynasty.[86] The only (albeit quite significant) confusion, is the assumption that Constantine had been made emperor through marriage to Theodora. By the 15th century, therefore, Egyptian tradition had a reasonably clear understanding of mid-eleventh century Byzantine politics. Some of this information might have originated much earlier, as shown by the material presented by Ibn al-Athīr.

Neither Ibn al-Athīr or al-Qalqashandī acknowledge Theodora's succession after Constantine. Nonetheless, Arabic historiography is aware that Theodora was ruling independently in 447/1055–6. As was noted above, Theodora is associated with the dispute with the Fatimids over the Constantinople mosque in this year. All but one of the Arabic accounts of this event agree that Byzantium was ruled by an empress at the time. The only exception is al-Maqrīzī's *khiṭaṭ*, which employs "mutamallik al-rūm (Byzantine pretender)" to describe the emperor who received Tughril's envoy. This suggests that al-Maqrīzī had edited the account to conform with his sources that suggested Ibn Saqlārūs, rather than Theodora was on the throne in 447/1055–6, as he had done when describing the dispatch of the Byzantine navy (see note 27).[87] Table 7.2 outlines the remaining sources.

Only al-Maqrīzī names the empress as Theodora. Given that under the same year al-Maqrīzī gives his type 1 account detailing Theodora's dispatch of the Byzantine navy, he might have inferred this from his other account of the same year. The remaining tradition only remarks of "a woman" ruling Byzantium (a strange occurrence, which deserved note). Nonetheless, there is a broad agreement here that an empress was ruling during the year 447/1055–6.

In summary, by al-Maqrīzī's lifetime, Arabic sources believed that emperor Constantine IX had ruled as emperor from 434/1042–3, through marriage to Theodora, and died in 446/1054–5. They also claim that a woman was in power during the following Islamic year 447/1055–6. This dating corresponds with the impression provided in the type 1 accounts. There an emperor ruled until 446/1054–5, when he died of natural causes and was succeeded by a woman. Al-Maqrīzī's *itti'āẓ* variant, moreover, appears to expand further

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86   If one compares with any summary of this period taken from the Greek sources, they will find a similar outline. Al-Qalashandī's dating of Michael V's attempted coup is even accurate. See, for example, Kaldellis, *Streams*, pp. 158–178.

87   Al-Maqrīzī, *khiṭaṭ*, 2:135.

TABLE 7.2   Descriptions of Empress Theodora in Ibn Khallikān, Ibn Muyassar and al-Dhahabī

Historian	Describes empress as:	
Ibn Khallikān	malikat al-rūm	Queen of Byzantium
(d. 681/1282)	ʾimrʾa kāfira[a]	an infidel woman
Ibn Muyassar	malika[b]	Queen
(d. 677/1278)		
al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348)	malikat al-naṣārā[c]	Queen of the Christians
	malikat al-rūm[d]	Queen of Byzantium

a   Both descriptions are found in the same passage: Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān wa-anbāʾ abnāʾ al-zamān*, 5, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbāss (Beirut, 1968), p. 66.
b   Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār*, p. 18.
c   al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 18, ed. Shuʿayb Arnāʾūṭ (Beirut, 1996), p. 109.
d   al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-aʿlām: ḥawādith wa-wafayāt*, 30, ed. ʿUmar Tadmurī (Beirut, 1994), p. 380.

on this well-established narrative. There he states that Theodora died (presumably in the year 447/1055–6, under which the account is given), after a reign of 7 years, 9 months and 12 days (This appears to loosely correspond with the idea that Theodora had ruled jointly with Constantine IX). Type 1 accounts, therefore, broadly conform to the traditional Arabic narrative of Byzantine politics, up to the reign of Theodora.

4   Al-Maqrīzī's Knowledge of Michael VI and Romanos Skleros

Already in one of his type 1 accounts, al-Maqrīzī appears better informed than his predecessors, as he states that Theodora was succeeded by an emperor Michael. Michael VI appears unknown to the traditional Arabic narrative cited above. Given Michael ruled for only a year, it is perhaps not surprising that the sources ignore this emperor. Moreover, as Shepard has noted, the exact dating for the reigns of Theodora, Michael VI and Isaac Komnenos is confused in the western sources.[88] Al-Qalqashandī's summary of the emperors shows that historians were poorly acquainted with Byzantine politics between the death of Theodora and the reign of Romanos IV Diogenes. Al-Qalqashandī continued after Constantine IX's death:

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88   Jonathan Shepard, "Isaac Comnenus' Coronation Day," *Byzantinoslavica*, 38 (1977), pp. 22–31.

> Armānūs [Romanos] was made king over the Byzantines [*al-rūm*], and that was the beginning of the Seljuk state, and he left for the countries of Islam. Alp Arslān marched out towards him from Azerbaijan and defeated him, resulting in his capture.[89]

This is quite clearly a description of the 463/1071 battle of Manzikert; al-Qalqashandī has omitted fifteen years of Byzantine history. On one hand, this follows a familiar pattern of preservation in Arabic historiography. After Theodora's acceptance of the Seljuk envoy, the battle of Manzikert would be the next major political event with which Arabic historians were concerned. However, this is uncharacteristic of al-Qalqashandī's work, whose outline of the Byzantine emperors is reasonably meticulous (As the above example of Constantine VIII and his daughters illustrates). It is, therefore, more likely that al-Qalqashandī's omission represents a gap in his knowledge, and thus a problem with his sources.

Al-Maqrīzī's addition of Michael VI's succession to his type 1 account could, therefore, be read in one of two ways. One, his type 1 accounts use a more-detailed source that was unknown to the earlier Arabic tradition, including his contemporary al-Qalqashandī.[90] Two, he added this information to his type 1 account from another source. The former appears quite likely given – as was noted above – that al-Maqrīzī's *itti'āẓ* variant represents a far less abbreviated form of the type 1 account. In either case, al-Maqrīzī clearly had access to material hitherto unknown, or at least ignored, by the Arabic tradition. It is in this light that we should read the more complex type 2 accounts.

4.1   *Type 2 Accounts: Mīkhā'īl and Michael VI*

In the type 2 accounts, al-Maqrīzī names the emperor responsible for dispatching the grain as Mīkhā'īl. In the variant in the *itti'āẓ*, al-Maqrīzī writes that this emperor died "on the eighth of Shawwāl [446/10th January 1055], and the length of his reign was twelve years and seven months. He was 54 years and a month old." The dates given here, even the length of the reign itself, correspond exactly with that given in the Greek sources for the reign of Constantine

89   al-Qalqashandī, *ṣubḥ*, 5:401.
90   Some surviving letters show that the two scholars had exchanged scholarly advice. Al-Maqrīzī could, however, have jealously guarded his source, or uncovered it after al-Qalqashandī's death. See, Frédéric Bauden, "Maqriziana XIII: An Exchange of Correspondence Between al-Maqrīzī and al-Qalqashandī," in *Developing Perspectives in Mamluk History: Essays in Honor of Amalia Levanoni* (Leiden, 2017), pp. 201–229.

IX.[91] Al-Maqrīzī appears, therefore, to be describing Constantine's reign here. However, as can be seen from the comparison made above, this anecdote is unique to the *itti'āẓ* variant. It, therefore, represents a later insertion made by al-Maqrīzī to elaborate on the source that forms the basis for his type 2 account. What is crucial is that al-Maqrīzī names this ruling emperor as Mīkhā'īl, in contrast to that suggested by the standard Arabic narrative, which is only aware of Michael IV and V.

In both the *itti'āẓ* and *muqaffā* variants of the type 2 account, al-Maqrīzī's descriptions correspond to emperor Michael VI. Mīkhā'īl is described as "a commander/master of war [*ṣāḥib al-ḥarb*]", who had been sent on an embassy during the vizierate of al-Falāḥī. Constantine IX's truce with the Fatimids is well-known, but the details of its envoys have not survived. It is known from the Greek sources that prior to assuming the throne Michael VI had been titled *Stratiotikos*. Modern historians describe this office as one that is nominally attached to the military, but essentially a bureaucratic position. "Commander/master of war" might, therefore, be a fitting Arabic reading of Michael VI's title.[92] Although we cannot know if Michael VI ever participated in an embassy to Egypt, the identity of Mīkhā'īl is confirmed by the assertion in the type 2 accounts that he was killed in a coup, as Michael VI was indeed overthrown by Isaac Komnenos.[93]

This embassy, according to the *itti'āẓ* variant, was under the direction of an emperor Constantine. The *Book of Gifts and Rarities* also claims that during al-Falāḥī's vizierate (436–439/1044–1048) an embassy had been sent in the year 437/1046–7, which had agreed a ten-year truce that would end in the year 447/1055–6.[94] It is thus accepted by both al-Maqrīzī and another Egyptian source (which is a copy of a contemporary Fatimid work) that a Constantine was on the throne in 437/1046–7. Al-Maqrīzī then claims Michael VI was on the throne by the time of the coup in 447/1055–6. This impression is again confirmed by the *Book of Gifts and Rarities*: "In the year 444 [1053] when al-Ḥasan

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91　　Attaleiates states exactly twelve years and seven months: Attaleiates, *History*, p. 91; Kaldellis states that Constantine either died on 7,8 or 11th January 1055: Kaldellis, *Streams*, p. 213.

92　　Jenkins, *Byzantine Empire,* p. 363; Blaum "Diplomacy," p. 45; Charles Brand, "Michael VI Stratiotikos," In *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. (Oxford 1991). Retrieved 17 Jan. 2019, from http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/978019504 6526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-3533.

93　　Beihammer also notes how Michael VI is recognisable from the descriptions in the text: Beihammer, *Emergence*, p. 101.

94　　Ghāda al-Ḥijjāwī al-Qaddūmī (trans.)*, Book of Gifts and Rarities* (*Kitāb al-Hadāyā wa al-Tuḥaf*) *Selections Compiled in the Fifteenth Century from an Eleventh-Century Manuscript on Gifts and Treasures* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996), p. 108.

b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Yāzūrī was vizier, Michael, the Byzantine emperor, sent magnificent gifts…"[95] The presence of al-Yāzūrī in this anecdote means that the dating cannot be an error. The editor suggests that the emperor should be read here as Constantine IX, rather than Michael as the date corresponds to his rule.[96] The presence of Michael, however, suggests two possibilities. One, that a Fatimid editor or compiler had concluded Michael VI was on the throne in this period. Two, given that the *Book of Gifts and Rarities* survives in a fifteenth-century copy, that a later copyist had changed the name. In either case, by the Mamluk period some rare sources had confused Constantine IX with Michael VI, believing him to be ruling in the early 440s/1048–1057 and overthrown in 446/1054–5.

4.2   *Ibn Saqlārūs and Romanos Skleros*

According to the type 2 account, an individual known as Ibn Saqlārūs had committed a coup against emperor Michael VI. On this basis, Bianquis, Halm and Beihammer all read Ibn Saqlārūs as a mistake for Isaac Komnenos, who did overthrow Michael VI in 449/1057.[97] Bianquis and Halm translate Ibn Saqlārūs as "Son of Skleros" and this is convincing. The family name Saqlārūs was not unknown to the Arabic sources. Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī describes the rebellion of a Bardās Saqlārūs against the emperor Basil II in 377–8/987.[98] In Greek sources this rebel is known as Bardas Skleros.[99] There is, however, more to the identity of Ibn Saqlārūs that should be explored.

Romanos Skleros, who was a grandson of Bardas, had played a crucial role in Isaac's rebellion in 449/1057.[100] It is, therefore, striking that al-Maqrīzī identifies a "son of Skleros" with a rebellion against Michael VI two years prior to Isaac's. Crucial here is his association with Antioch. Al-Maqrīzī claims that the

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95   Al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, p. 110.

96   Al-Qaddūmī, *Gifts*, paragraph 85, n. 2; Anthony Cutler accepts the attribution of Michael VI: Anthony Cutler, "Gifts and Gift Exchange as Aspects of the Byzantine, Arab, and Related Economies," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 55 (2001), p. 267.

97   Bianquis, *Damas*, pp. 566–568 Halm, *Kalifen*, pp. 381–382; Beihammer, *Emergence*, pp. 100–101.

98   Yaḥya al-Anṭākī, *Taʾrīkh al-anṭākī, al-maʿrūf b-ṣala taʾrīkh awtīkhā*, ed. ʿAmr ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Trablus, 1990), Yaḥya first refers to Bardās Saqlārūs on p. 141.

99   Kaldellis, *Streams*, pp. 96–97.

100   Romanos' role in Isaac's rebellion is well known. See, for example: Finlay, *Byzantine Empire*, pp. 533 and 535–536; Jenkins, *Byzantine empire*, p. 364; more recently, Kaldellis, *streams*, p. 217. James Howard-Johnston notes the policy changes under Constantine IX that had led men like Romanos to rebel: Howard-Johnston "Crown lands and the Defence of Imperial Authority in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 21 (1995), esp. 98–99.

people of Antioch rose up against the emperor with Skleros at their head. According to the seals, Romanos Skleros was duke of Antioch in Rabīʿ I-Rabīʿ II 446/July 1054 and a new duke was appointed in 447–8/1056. Disappearing from the sigillographic record, Skleros then only reappears in connection with Isaac's rebellion a year later.[101] It is surely not a coincidence that Skleros ceased to be duke of Antioch around the time of Constantine's death and al-Maqrīzī's alleged coup. Moreover, if we compare the variants in the *ittiʿāẓ* and the *muqaffā*, only in the former does al-Maqrīzī identify Ibn Saqlārūs as an emperor. The *muqaffā*, by comparison, refers to Ibn Saqlārūs without a title. It is likely that his designation as emperor was added by al-Maqrīzī to clarify the account. Moreover, the word al-Maqrīzī uses is "pretender [*mutamallik*]", where earlier in the *ittiʿāẓ* variant he had described Michael as a "king [*malik*]." There is the suggestion here, therefore, that Ibn Saqlārūs's coup was a localised rebellion.

This view presents one clear reading of al-Maqrīzī and the *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, and the way in which they, or their sources, were edited. Arabic observers were evidently aware that Romanos Skleros had been involved in a coup against Michael VI. Thus, when they encountered Romanos Skleros in a rebellion in Antioch around two years earlier, they assumed that its must have been part of the same movement. The use of Michael for a treaty in the 440s/1048–1057 in the *Book of Gifts and Rarities* suggests there was a more widespread attempt to re-date Michael's reign. Although we cannot pinpoint when historians became confused about the reign of Michael VI, this does nonetheless provide some insight into Egyptian perspectives on Byzantine politics. Firstly, it tells us that a narrow set of sources did have unique insight into the period that followed the death of Constantine IX. Secondly, it suggests that a rebellion had occurred in Antioch around 446/1054–5 and that was the principle cause of the conflict on the frontier. This presents a far more complex image of the conflict than that presented by the type 1 accounts alone.

5   Conclusions

From the above analysis we begin to see how Arabic, and especially Egyptian sources, understood Byzantine politics in this period. The Arabic corpus is

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101   V. Laurent, "La Chronologie des Gouverneur D'Antioche sous la Seconde Domination Byzantine," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph*, 38 (1962), pp. 242–243; Blaum simply claims Skleros was replaced sometime around Constantine IX's death, Blaum, "diplomacy," p. 37. Felix stresses that Romanos was duke of Antioch just prior to the dispute with the Fatimids, but strangely he does not associate him with Ibn Saqlārūs of the Arabic sources: Felix, *Byzanz*, p. 120, n. 224. For more on Romanos's career: Werner Seibt, *Die Skleroi: eine prosopographisch-sigillographische Studie*, (Wien, 1976), pp. 76–85.

generally very unclear on the period following the death of Theodora. In this context, al-Maqrīzī's understanding is striking. He can give an exact length for Constantine's reign (albeit attributed to Michael VI), and provide dates for Theodora's reign and Michael VI's succession. He can, moreover, name a key protagonist from the coup of Isaac Komnenos – that is, Romanos Skleros – and associate him with a coup against the emperor Michael. Al-Maqrīzī's assembly of the facts is clearly quite muddled, but the information upon which it is based appears reasonably sound. It suggests that al-Maqrīzī has access to material that is quite well-informed about Byzantine politics.

If we accept this, we must treat al-Maqrīzī's assertions about Ibn Saqlārūs as serious reflections on Byzantine politics from the Arabic perspective. Al-Maqrīzī's accounts suggest that Ibn Saqlārūs had started a rebellion from Antioch, a long time prior to the overthrow of Michael VI. Given this, we need to think more carefully about Romanos Skleros's career after he ceased to be duke of Antioch. Ibn Saqlārūs' supposed involvement in the negotiations is also quite striking. Catherine Holmes has emphasised how during the tenth and early-eleventh century dukes in Antioch were expected to deal with both military and diplomatic issues on the frontier.[102] The type 2 accounts, therefore, suggest that Romanos Skleros had engaged in the negotiations with and fighting against the Fatimids, as might be expected of a frontier governor.

This reading of the events suggested by al-Maqrīzī can presently be only speculative. A much closer and detailed reading of the accounts in conjunction with sources from other linguistic traditions is needed to understand the significance of these accounts for our understanding of Romanos Skleros, Michael VI and Isaac Komnenos. What the present chapter has shown is the detailed information that Egyptian scholars possessed about Byzantine politics and the Fatimid-Byzantine relationship. Given the chronological distance between our historians and the events that the describe, it is interesting in itself that such information about Byzantium has survived. It shows that information about Byzantine politics and dynastic change did cross the frontier and enter the Egyptian historiographical tradition. It, moreover, shows how different information followed different channels. Thus, the more military-oriented type 1 accounts convey different information about Byzantine politics to the diplomacy-oriented type 2 accounts. Furthermore, this chapter illustrates how the study of the transmission of ideas outside of the Byzantine sphere might provide new historical insights. The Egyptian sources can provide more than

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102   Catherine Holmes, "Byzantium's Eastern Frontier in the Tenth and the Eleventh Century.," in *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices*, eds., David Abulafia and Nora Berend, (Aldershot, 2002), p. 96.

just an alternative perspective. Treated critically, these sources offer crucial insights into an otherwise murky period of Byzantine history.

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The Apparition of Leo of Chalcedon

Anna Komnene's Reproduction of a Lost Family Account of the Doukai

Peter Bara

In August 1087 Alexios I Komnenos led a military campaign against the Pechenegs to the borderlands of Thrace in the Lower Danube region. His troops were utterly defeated, the emperor was injured, and the commanders of the army suggested withdrawal. George Palaiologos, the brother-in-law of the *basileus*, also fled. Anna Komnene records the events in her *Alexiad*:[1]

> And Palaiologos that day while his brigades were routed in flight, fell from his horse and lost it. Being in a desperate situation and seeing the danger looming over his head, he looked around to see whether he could find his horse anywhere. [Then] he set his eyes on Leo, bishop of Chalcedon, […] who was wearing a priestly robe and gave a horse to Palaiologos. [The commander] mounted the horse and had the chance to flee. Palaiologos could not see that man anymore, who seemed to be a saintly person.[2]

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1 A highly selective set of starting points as an introduction to the *Alexiad*: *Anna Komnene: The Alexiad* trans. Georgina Buckler and Peter Frankopan, (London, 2009). Anna Komnene as a female author: Leonora A. Neville, *Anna Komnene: The Life and Work of a Medieval Historian* (Oxford, 2016). For an overarching literary approach to the work, see: Georgina Buckler, *Anna Comnena. A Study* (London 1929), Penelope Buckley, *The Alexiad of Anna Komnene: Artistic Strategy in the Making of a Myth* (Cambridge, 2014). Concerning the structure of the *Alexiad*: Julian Chrysostomides, "A Byzantine Historian: Anna Comnena," in *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds*, ed. David O. Morgan (London, 1982), pp. 30–46. On authorship and use of sources: Thalia Gouma-Peterson, ed., *Anna Komnene and her Times* (New York 2000). In *lieu* of a missing commentary on the *Alexiad*, see the German translation by Reinsch: Dieter R. Reinsch, trans., *Anna Comnena: Alexias*, 2 vols. (Berlin and New York, 2001).

2 Anna Komnene, *Alexias*, ed. Dieter R. Reinsch and Athanasios Kambylis (Berlin and New York, 2001), 2 vols., 1: Prolegomena et Textus, 2: Indices, *Al.* henceforth. The English translations are those of Robert Sewter and Peter Frankopan (Robert Sewter and Peter Frankopan, transl., *Anna Komnene: The Alexiad* (London, 2009)) with my occasional modifications. *Al.* 7.4.1: "ὁ δὲ Παλαιολόγος ἐν τῷ φεύγειν τῶν ταγμάτων ἡττηθέντων κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην κατενεχθεὶς τοῦ ἵππου ἀπώλεσε τοῦτον. ἐν ἀμηχανίᾳ δὲ ὢν καὶ τὸν κίνδυνον ἱστάμενον ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς ὁρῶν περιαθρήσας εἴ που γένοιτό οἱ τοῦτον θεάσασθαι, ὁρᾷ τὸν τῆς Χαλκηδόνος πρόεδρον Λέοντα

The holy man saved the life of a Byzantine general in a battle that had already been lost. It is not particularly obvious why Anna Komnene should include this kind of imagery in her history, or what narrative purpose the episode might serve. Why would the princess cast a banished, controversial Byzantine prelate as the mediator of divine help in the aftermath of one of the greatest military disasters of her father's reign? Did the princess conform to a fossilised hagiographical tradition and transmit one of its elements without modification? Anna Komnene seldom inserted passages into her historical work that mirrored characteristics of hagiographical narratives. In addition to the passage under analysis, only two visions in dreams and one other apparition are mentioned by the historian.[3]

Modern scholarship has not supplied a satisfactory analysis of the passage. It has been asserted that she had used dreams and apparitions to "underline the providential destiny of the hero and the Orthodoxy of his faith in divine Providence."[4] Dion Smythe observes that Anna had created a hagiographical atmosphere and that the metropolitan is here portrayed in a more favourable light than in Book 5, in which details of Leo's controversy with Alexios I are provided.[5] Penelope Buckley argues that Leo's apparition is "deeply traditional: the idea of the holy man, saint or angel who intervenes in battle on the Byzantine side has been sanctioned as part of the empire's armoury since Herakleios at least. [Anna Komnene] treats the phenomenon with respect".[6] Buckley sees the scenario as the narratological means by which Anna expressed that tenets of the traditional Byzantine piety prevailed over Alexios as a savage soldier-emperor, for whom religiosity was of secondary importance. Thus, Buckley regards the *Alexiad* as a historical work in which Alexios I undergoes personal development: he transforms from a soldier-emperor to become ultimately a

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[…] τὴν ἱερατικὴν στολὴν ἠμφιεσμένον ἵππον ἐπιδιδόντα αὐτῷ, ἐν ᾧ ἐπιβὰς εἴχετο τῆς φυγῆς· τὸν δὲ ἱεροπρεπῆ ἐκεῖνον ἄνδρα οὐκέτι τεθέαται."

3   I will treat those passages below. The phenomenon itself is not surprising, since the Komnenian epoch was not the golden age of hagiography and some intellectuals even rejected the paradigm of the holy man; see: Paul Magdalino, "The Byzantine Holy Man in the Twelfth Century," in *The Byzantine Saint*, ed. Sergei Hackel (London, 1981), pp. 51–66; see also: Stefanos Efthymiadis, ed., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, 1 (Farnham and Burlington, 2011), p. 143.

4   Paul Magdalino, "The Historiography of Dreaming in Medieval Byzantium," in *Dreaming in Byzantium and Beyond*, eds. Christina Angelidi and George T. Calofonos (Farnham and Burlington, 2014), pp. 125–144, esp. pp. 132–133.

5   Dion Smythe, "Alexios and the Heretics," in *Alexios I Komnenos*, eds. Margaret Mullett and Dion Smythe (Belfast, 1996), p. 257.

6   Buckley, *Alexiad*, p. 156.

second Constantine, a thirteenth Apostle, in the course of his reign.[7] Buckley notes that in the course of this narrative in Books 7 and 8, "Alexios is not the chief bearer of Byzantine pieties."[8]

I believe that Anna Komnene was not in accord with the view that Alexios I lost the battle at Distra due to his un orthodox conduct. This was in fact the opinion of eleventh-, and twelfth-century Byzantines whom Anna was refuting when she composed the passage. Modern research has failed to recognise this discourse, and therefore reflected only on some of its elements. In my view, the scene can be understood properly if one considers the circumstances of the *Alexiad*'s mid-twelfth-century composition and the late-eleventh-century milieu of the Pecheneg wars. In order to examine all elements essential for the understanding of the passage, the paper is divided into four sections. First, I examine the apparition's source material and the context in which this source was produced. After this, the critique of John the Oxite, voiced in 1091, is surveyed. Third, the study connects the context of the apparition with that of the 1140s and pinpoints elements of the critique against the reign of Alexios I that could have influenced the composition of the passage by Anna Komnene. The investigation is closed by the claim that Anna Komnene used a "double argumentation" and the apparition pertains only to one level of it.

1 The Source Material of the Apparition and Its Late Eleventh Century Context

1.1 *A Lost Biographical Source*

The apparition is embedded into a short excursus, or anecdote, on George Palaiologos. George Palaiologos became member of the Doukas family upon marrying Anna Doukaina. As a result of pressure from his mother-in-law, Maria of Bulgaria, he supported Alexios I's accession to the throne in 1081.

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7 Penelope Buckley should be praised here for her pioneering attempt at giving an overarching explanatory model for the entire *Alexiad*, the first after Georgina Buckler's monograph (see note xx). Critiques regarding her attempt focused especially on her methodology. For Buckley's critique by Alexander Riehle, see *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 65 (2015), pp. 262–264; he finds that "Insgesamt hat das Buch einer eher essayistischen als systematischen Charakter, was bei der Lektüre eines Werkesdieses Umfangs doch ermüdet und die Nachvollziehbarkeit und berprüfbarkeit der Thesen erschwert." See also E. Mincin's review: http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1672, accessed 17 Jan 2019.

8 Buckley, *Alexiad*, 156.

Afterwards, Palaiologos became one of Alexios' most trusted generals.[9] During the 10th and 11th centuries, it was a customary practice to record deeds of great aristocratic soldiers and their families in the form of memoirs and biographies. This custom also continued into the 12th century.[10] Despite the fact that such works did not survive, this literature can be traced in extant historical works. Collecting scattered passages in the text of the *Alexiad*, Peter Frankopan has attempted to reconstruct a source narrating George Palaiologos' career.[11] A monastic *typikon* from the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos (r. 1259–1282) supports the view that detailed records existed concerning the Palaiologan family. The typikon directs the reader "to orations and books composed by the learned" to understand more about Michael VIII's ancestry.[12] Although we do not know when exactly these texts were written, Anna Komnene's work demonstrates a detailed knowledge of George Palaiologos' career that may be based on this written material.[13] The description of Leo of Chalcedon's apparition scenario could have reached Anna as part of this biographical source.

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9   Peter Frankopan, "Kinship and the Distribution of Power," *English Historical Review* 495 (2007), pp. 1–34, esp. p. 13.

10   Some samples from the literature on this topic: Jonathan Shepard, "Scylitzes on Armenia in the 1040s, and the Role of Catacalon Cecaumenos," *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, 11 (1975–76), pp. 269–311; Id., "Byzantium's Last Sicilian Expedition: Scylitzes' Testimony," *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici*, 24–26 (1977–79), pp. 145–159; Id., "A Suspected Source of John Scylitzes' Synopsis Historion: the Great Catacalon Cecaumenos," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 19 (1992), pp. 171–178; Athanasios Markopoulos, "Zu den Biographien des Nikephoros Phokas," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 38 (1988), 225–233; Id., "Ἡ ἱστοριογραφία των δυνατών κατά τη μεσοβυζαντινή περίοδο. Ο Ιωάννης Κοθρκούας στην ιστορική συγγραφή του πρωροσπαθάριου και κριτή Μανουήλ," *Parousia*, 17–18 (2004–2005), pp. 397–405; Id., "From Narrative Historiography to Historical Biography. New Trends in Byzantine Historical Writing in the 10th–11th Centuries," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 102 (2009), pp. 703–705; Jakov Ljubarskij, "Nikephoros Phokas in Byzantine Historical Writing-Trace of the Secular Biography in Byzantium," *Byzantinoslavica*, 554 (1993), pp. 245–253; Catherine Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976–1025)* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 255–297; Leonora Neville, "A History of the Caesar John Doukas in Nikephoros Bryennios' Material for History?," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 32.2 (2008), pp. 168–188; Ead., *Heroes and Romans in Twelfth-Century Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 49–59.

11   Peter Frankopan, "Aristocratic Family Narratives in Twelfth-Century Byzantium," in *Reading in the Byzantine Empire and Beyond*, eds. Ida Toth and Teresa Shawcross, (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 317–335.

12   Henri Grégoire, "Imperatoris Michaelis Palaeologi de vita sua," *Byzantion*, 29–30 (1959–60), p. 449: εἰς σοφῶν λόγους καὶ βίβλους συγγραφικὰς.

13   Anna Komnene is well informed about the careers of several generals. She claims in multiple passages to have received information from eyewitnesses, and she further notes that George Palaiologos was one of her chief informants (*Al.* 14.7.5). However, there is no evidence that Anna Komnene took notes during the family events, or in the *theatra*, the

1.2   *The Image of the Holy Protector: Leo of Chalcedon and George Palaiologos*

In the apparition scenario, Anna Komnene portrays Leo, the metropolitan bishop of Chalcedon, as a holy protector.[14] The metropolitan was the central figure of the Komnenian Iconoclast Debate, a lengthy religious controversy in the first part of Alexios' reign (1082–1094).[15] In order to be able to pay his mercenaries in his war against Robert of Guiscard, the emperor confiscated a

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"reading gatherings" that constituted the framework for oral performance of different literary works and, plausibly, of military memoirs in Komnenian Byzantium. Based on a growing scholarly consensus, it is reasonable to assume that Anna's pretended use of primary, especially oral, material (*autopsia*) conforms to the classical historiographical tradition, particularly that of Thucydides. She knows too many details about a large number of people that she presumably could not simply recall from memory. On this topic, see: Kyle Sinclair, "Anna Komnene and her Sources for Military Affairs in the *Alexiad*," *Estudios bizantinos*, 2 (2014), pp. 143–185; Dieter R. Reinsch, "Zur literarischen Leistungen des Anna Komnene," in *Leimon: Studies Presented to Lennart Rydén on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Jan O. Rosenqvist (Uppsala, 1996), pp. 113–125.

14   It is noteworthy that Anna Komnene gave an overview of the Komnenian Iconoclast Debate in Book 5 (*Al.* 5.2), which is apologetic in tone with respect to Alexios and critical with respect to Leo of Chalcedon.

15   The controversy under discussion is called the "Komnenian Iconoclasm" (A. Carr), or the "Chalcedonian Controversy" (V. Gerhold). Since during the controversy a number of icons, holy objects, and church decoration were destroyed, I prefer to use the first term. I addition to this, I use "Komnenian Iconoclast Debate/Controversy," since substantial theoretical discussion also took place. On the Komnenian Iconoclast Debate, see: Michael Angold, *Church and Society Under the Comneni 1081–1261* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 45–73; Pamela Armstrong, "Alexios Komnenos, Holy Men and Monasteries," in *Alexios I Komnenos*, eds. Margaret Mullett and Dyon Smythe (Belfast, 1996), pp. 219–231; Charles E. Barber, "Leo of Chalcedon, Euthymios Zigabenos and the Return to the Past," in *Contesting the Logic of Painting* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 131–158; Annemarie W. Carr, "Leo of Chalcedon and the icons," in *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art historical studies in honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. Doula Mouriki et al. (Princeton, 1995), pp. 579–601; Paul Gautier, "Le synode des Blachernes (fin 1094). Étude prosopographique," *Revue des études byzantines*, 29 (1971), pp. 213–284; Victoria E. Gerhold, "Le 'mouvement' chalcédonien: opposition ecclésiastique et aristocratique sous le règne d'Alexis Comnène (1081–1094)," *Erytheia*, 33 (2012), pp. 87–104; Alexander Glavinas, Ἡ ἐπὶ Ἀλεξίου Κομνηνοῦ (*1081–1118*) περὶ ἱερῶν σκευῶν, κειμηλίων καὶ ἁγίων εἰκόνων ἔρις (*1081–1095*) (Thessalonike, 1972); Venance Grumel, "L' affaire de Léon de Chalcédoine. Le chrysobulle d' Alexis Ier sur les objets sacrés," *Byzantine Studies/Études byzantines*, 2 (1944), pp. 126–133; Id., "L'affaire de Léon de Chalcédoine: le décret ou 'semeioma' d'Alexis Ier Comnène (1086)," *Echos d'Orient*, 39 (1941–42), pp. 333–341; Id., "Léon de Chalcédoine et le canon de la fête du saint Mandilion," *Analecta Bollandiana*, 68 = Mélanges Paul Peeters, II., pp. 135–152; Alexander Lauriotes, "Ἱστορικὸν ζήτημα ἐκκλησιαστικὸν ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας Ἀλεξίου Κομνηνοῦ," Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἀλήθεια, 10 No. 36 (1900), pp. 403–407 and 10, No. 37 (1900), pp. 411–416; Pelopidas Stephanou, "La doctrine

considerable number of church valuables to mint coins in 1082. Together with the trial of John Italos,[16] this was the launch of a new phase in the relationship between church and state after 1081, the accession of the Komnenoi.[17] The regents resorted to the confiscation of church property again between 1086 and 1091 at the time of the Pecheneg invasion. Moreover, Alexios appointed a new patriarch, Eustratios Garidas, who served as his puppet. The previous patriarch, Kosmas, was dismissed and the clergy of the Great Church and the episcopal bench were intimidated. Sacred objects were also taken from provincial bishops and this, together with the oppressive taxation, constituted a heavy burden for the people. Alexios' measures concerning the church kindled critiques from his eleventh-century contemporaries and twelfth-century successors. Moreover, this resulted in a negative assessment of these policies from modern scholars.[18] Leo of Chalcedon led the opposition against the new regime, supported by churchmen and leading members in the imperial administration. The prelate was stripped of his see and exiled to Sozopolis around 1087. The controversy ended with the Blachernai synod of 1094. A high number of ecclesiastical and lay *archontes* participated in the event.[19] This demonstrates that the Komnenian Iconoclasm had a wide social influence and Alexios I aimed at settling the issue with the involvement of leaders coming from both the secular and ecclesiastical spheres.[20]

George Palaiologos, whose life was saved by Leo of Chalcedon according to the narrative of the *Alexiad*, was a fierce admirer and supporter of the prelate, along with the Doukas family. In particular, Maria of Bulgaria, Alexios I's mother-in-law, and George Palaiologos greatly respected Leo of Chalcedon.[21]

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de Léon de Chalcédoine et de ses adversaires sur les images," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 12 (1946), pp. 177–199; Id., "Le procès de Léon de Chalcédoine," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 9 (1943), pp. 5–64; John P. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire* (Washington, 1987), esp. pp. 186–214.

16 On John Italos, see most recently András Kraft, István Perczel, "John Italos on the Eternity of the World," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 111 (2018), pp. 659–720 with an overview of previous scholarship.

17 Alexios' policy on *charistike* was also debated. For a detailed presentation, consult: Angold, *Church and Society*, pp. 45–73; and Élisabeth Malamut, *Alexis Ier Comnène* (Paris, 2007), pp. 191–266.

18 See f.i. Madgalino, *The Empire of Manuel I*, p. 271.

19 For the list of participants, see: P. Gautier, "Le synode des Blachernes," pp. 213–220.

20 When the plot of Diogenes, probably the most significant conspiracy during Alexios' reign, was revealed in the same year (i.e. 1094), Alexios called together everybody who accompanied him to the campaign to settle the issue, see: *Al.* 9.9.6 and P. Frankopan, "Kinship," p. 18.

21 Grumel, "Le décret," p. 334.

Leo's *Letter to Maria of Bulgaria* during his period of his exile suggests that Leo was Maria's spiritual father. Based on the letter, Leo also prayed regularly for the entire Doukas branch of the imperial family.

Anna Komnene portrayed Leo of Chalcedon wearing a robe, which indicated that he was a member of the church hierarchy in a broad sense (τὴν ἱερατικὴν στολὴν ἠμφιεσμένον), but did not define him as a bishop.[22] During Leo's exile (ca. 1087–1094), his position in the church hierarchy was a matter of debate. Leo's deposition was accepted neither by the prelate himself, nor by his supporters. After the Blachernai synod the dispute ended since Leo was restored to his previous position.[23] Thus, Anna's apparition scenario preserved an image of Leo that was promoted by the Doukai in the aftermath of the battle of Dristra, between 1087 and 1094.

2   The Critique of John the Oxite

Simultaneously with the exile of Leo of Chalcedon, Alexios I's policy was attacked by another churchman: John IV the Oxite, Patriarch of Antioch.[24] In early 1091, the emperor faced enemies on two fronts. The Pechenegs approached the capital and arrived at a small fortress called Choirobakchoi, which was situated only a day's march from the capital.[25] Tzachas, a Turkish commander, constructed a naval fleet at Smyrna and occupied a number of islands on the Aegean coastline from Rhodes to Mytilene. Tzachas proclaimed himself emperor and sought an alliance with the Pechenegs.[26] In the escalating situation, the emperor returned to the capital and assembled his advisors in late February, or early March, to draw upon the expertise of civilian and

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22   Lampe 669, s. v. "ἱερατικός."
23   P. Gautier, "Le synode des Blachernes," pp. 280–284.
24   For John IV, the Oxite, *ODB* 2 1049 s. v. "John IV (v) Oxeites"; Paul Gautier, "Jean V l'Oxite, patriarche d'Antioche. Notice biographique," *Revue des études byzantines*, 22 (1964), pp. 128–157; Paul Gautier, "Réquisitoire du patriarche Jean d'Antioche contre le charisticariat." *Revue des études byzantines*, 33 (1975), pp. 77–132. John the Oxite was linked by John P. Thomas to Leo of Chalcedon, as members of the same "reform party" within the Byzantine church, see: *Private Religious Foundations*, pp. 186–199. This view was, however, rejected by Paul Magdalino and also by Michael Angold, see: Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 2009),p. 271; Angold, *Church and Society*, p. 66.
25   *Al.* 8.1.1–5.
26   *ODB* 3, 2134, s. v. "Tzachas."; Peter Frankopan, *The Foreign Policy of the Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081–c. 1100)*, PhD diss. (Oxford, 1998), pp. 346–350; Peter Frankopan, *The First Crusade: The Call from the East* (Cambridge, MA, 2016), pp. 58–64.

ecclesiastical leaders. John IV addressed the emperor in an oration and made a written summary of his claims.[27]

John the Oxite's address is an outstanding example of *parrhesia*, the unrestricted expression of opinion in attendance upon a potentate. His address modulates harsh critique with praise, which may explain the further success of his career and the emperor's benevolence towards him. The prelate claimed in his speech that God had ceased to protect Byzantium because of the impiety of the people and the personal vices of Alexios I and his family.[28] In John's view, the main failure of the people was that they had thought that all the evil befalling Byzantium had been the result of the working of natural forces which happen of themselves, and that they did not see God's hand in these events.[29] With regard to Alexios' role, John the Oxite contended that the situation of the empire had deteriorated since Alexios' accession to the throne.[30] According to John, God also demonstrated his pity for Alexios I Komnenos before his accession to the throne through miracles.[31]

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27   That there was an assembly can be known from these documents. The oration and the written summary were reedited and published by P. Gautier: Paul Gautier, "Diatribes de Jean l'Oxite contre Alexis 1er Comnène," *Revue des études byzantines*, 28 (1970), pp. 5–55. A comparative analysis is provided in: Peter Frankopan, "Where Advice Meets Criticism in 11th-century Byzantium: Theophylact of Ochrid, John the Oxite and Their (Re)presentations to the Emperor," *Al-Masaq*, 20 (2008), pp. 71–88.

28   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 21.

29   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 21, l. 16–20: "The majority of the people believed that maybe some kind of natural force, whose working happens of itself, or a fortuitous cause had merged the empire into the waves of difficulties. Thus, I heard some people saying that it was destined to be so, therefore it happened. Others think that God only cares for the salvation of our souls, thereby allowing that way the issues of the world just to happen by chance. I think that these are lies and perverse opinion of some people that the Lord of all with thousands of testimonies from the Scripture refute." ('οἱ πολλοὶ κατά τινα ἴσως αὐτοματισμὸν ἢ ἀποκλήρωσιν ᾤοντο τὴν οἰκομένην τοῖς τῶν συμφορῶν νῦν περικλύζεσθαι ῥεύμασιν. Ἤκουσα οὖν ἐγώ τινων λεγόντων ὡς ἔμελλεν ἄρα ταῦτα οὕτως ἔσεσθαι καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ γίνεται, ἑτέρων δὲ καὶ δοξαζόντων μόνης τὸν Θεὸν τῆς σωτηρίας κήδεσθαι τῶν ἡμετέρων ψυχῶν, τὰ δ' ἐν κόσμῳ πράγματα οὕτως ὡς ἂν τύχῃ φέρεσθαι καταλείπειν. τὰς οὖν τοιαύτας ψευδεῖς ἡγοῦμαί τε καὶ κακοδόξους ἐνίων δόξας τὸν τῶν ὅλων πρύτανιν ἐξελέγχοντα μετὰ μυρίων τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς γραφῆς μαρτυριῶν.').

30   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 25, l. 26–31; p. 27, l. 1–3.

31   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 37, l. 13–16: "There are a number of trustworthy tokens of God's pity upon you. Incredible miracles which occurred, and those especially in the most difficult moments. Miracles which took place earlier on many occasions particularly for your sake." ('εἴσι σοι πολλὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὰ ἐχέγγυα· αἱ ἐκ τοῦ παντὸς χρόνου παράδοξοι θεοσημίαι καὶ μάλιστα ἐν τοῖς περιστατικοῖς τῶν καιρῶν· τὰ εἰς αὐτόν σε πολλάκις πρότερον θαυματουργηθέντα.').

However, after the new dynasty started to wield power, a number of short-comings could be attributed to Alexios and the imperial family. First, Alexios came to power as a usurper and his troops pillaged Constantinople upon their entry.[32] The way in which the extended Komnenian family ruled was a disaster for the polity: members of the imperial family cared only about their own fortune.[33] The *basileus* should have chosen more honest men for high-level positions, not his relatives.[34] In addition to this, when the *basileus* faced the Norman threat and suffered losses from Bohemond, he neither saw this as a warning from God, nor did he repent.[35] Instead, Alexios placed confidence in troops, armies and humans means.[36] Third, the Komnenoi imposed a heavy taxation system on their subjects, and the comportment of local *archontes* and tax collectors was unbearable.[37] The peasants suffered and they did not know where to flee.[38] Fourth, due to the accession of the new dynasty, the affairs of the church also deteriorated. Alexios confiscated church valuables and gave ecclesiastical institutions into *epidosis*.[39] Moreover, in the process of confiscation, bishops and the clergy were maltreated and assaulted.[40] All these events resulted in the arrival of the Pechenegs and Tzacha's navy to punish Byzantium as "αἱ τῶν κακῶν Ἰλιάδαι."[41]

The prelate advised Alexios, his family and the people to repent profoundly.[42] John also emphasised the importance of philanthropy for an emperor.[43] The Patriarch suggested turning to the Theotokos in the Blachernai, reminding Alexios that in 860 the invading Rus' army had been turned away from the city walls with the help of the miraculous *maphorion* of the Blachernai church.[44] The written summary of the oration puts particular emphasis on the words of the Psalmist:

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32   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 29, l. 1–5.
33   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 21; p. 23; p. 41, l. 18–20.
34   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 43, l. 16–20.
35   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 29, l. 1–5.
36   John alludes here to Ps 143:6–8 (LXX).
37   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 31, l. 9–15.
38   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 35, l. 24.
39   On the term, see Marc Bartussis, *Land and Privilege in Byzantium. The Institution of Pronoia* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 153 fn. 77.
40   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 35, l. 15–17; p. 33, l. 1–4; p. 33, l. 10–12.
41   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 31, l. 5.
42   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 37.
43   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 43, l. 26–27.
44   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 39, l. 23–27.

If we are forced to do battle, let Christ himself be the commander and chief of the *tagmata*, and no one of our enemies could humble us, saying with the Psalmist: 'these with their chariots, others with their horses, but we will be made powerful with the name of our Lord (Ps 19.8 LXX).'[45]

Did the critique of John the Oxite fall on deaf ears? The source material allows one to make some observations about the Komnenian family. First, one might wonder whether Alexios I, the addressee of the talk, might have drawn some conclusions. As Peter Frankopan observes, from 1090 onwards, critical voices were raised against the *basileus* that did not come from his enemies, but from the circle of his intimates. John's oration is the precursor of internal turmoil that manifested in a series of plots by family members. Whether or not it was John's critique against Alexios' family government, one group of individuals, such as John Doukas, George Palaiologos, Adrian Komnenos, and Nikephoros Melissenos were silently replaced by another group of intimates from the end of the 11th century.[46]

Another close family member of Alexios is named by John in the oration: this is Isaakios, the *sebastokrator* and Alexios' brother.[47] The orator characterised Isaakios as an expert in theology and in the interpretation of Scripture.[48] John seems to designate Isaakos with the task of tackling the vices of the Byzantines as a *litteratus*. A look at the *sebastokrator*'s works confirm that Isaakios was an *amateur* of patristic authors, especially Maximos the Confessor.[49]

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45   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 51, l. 13–17: 'εἰ δέ ποτε καὶ στρατεύειν ἠναγκαζόμεθα, στρατάρχης ἐν ἡμῖν αὐτὸς ὁ Χριστὸς καὶ συνταγματάρχης καὶ ἐν τῷ μηδενὶ ἂν τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἡμῶν ἐταπείνου ὥστε καὶ λέγειν ἡμᾶς μετὰ τοῦ ψάλλοντος δύνασθαι· 'οὗτοι ἐν ἅρμασιν καὶ οὗτοι ἐν ἵπποις, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου Θεοῦ μεγαλυνθησόμεθα.''

46   Frankopan, "Where Advice Meets Criticism," p. 86, p. 88. In the light of John's suggestion of imperial *philanthropia*, it is also worth considering that it was Alexios I Komnenos who restored the Orphanotropheion of Zotikos which supported the poor, orphans and the elderly. Nevertheless, the Orphanage belongs chronologically to the latter part of Alexios' reign, slightly before 1104 at the earliest, so if its foundation was affected in any way by John the Oxite's views, this can only be considered as a long-term influence.

47   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 37, l. 36, p. 39, l. 7.

48   For his personage, see: PBW (consulted 17 Jan 2019) Isaakios 61, [http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/107449]. Isaakios presided over the synod condemning John Italos. He also tried to attack Leo of Chalcedon's theory on icons, however, he was unsuccessful. Moreover, the *sebastokrator* also acted as a chairman during the trial against Basil the Bogomil. Anna Komnene, her husband, Nikephoros Bryennos and later Nikephoros Basilakios characterised Isaakios as a man of learning who made the palace another Academia or Peripatos.

49   Carlos Steel, "Un admirateur de Saint Maxime à la cour des Comnènes: Isaac le Sébastocrator," in *Maximus Confessor. Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur, 1980*, ed. Felix Heinzer (Freiburg, 1982), pp. 365–373.

Fruther, it is by way of the excerpts that Isaakios compiled, that Proklos' *Ten Problems concerning Providence* survives.[50] Isaakios reworked Proklos' treatise into a more Christianised form, while maintaining its original structure.[51] The main aim of Proklos was to argue for the existence of providence and describe its nature in ten points (*aporiai*). The lack of belief in divine providence decried by John the Oxite, together with his address to Isaakios, might have provided an impetus for the *sebastokrator* to turn to Proklos and approach the misfortunes that had befallen Byzantium since the accession of the Komnenian dynasty in a scientific way.[52]

The third family member who might have been influenced by John the Oxite's claims was Anna Komnene. Before examining the connection between the *Alexiad* and John the Oxite's address, we should turn to the twelfth-century context in which Anna wrote her work.

3 The Komnenian Iconoclast Controversy and the Composition of the Alexiad

Based on her own statement, it is a well-known fact that Anna Komnene wrote the bulk of the *Alexiad* after 1143, the year of Manuel I Komnenos' succession.[53] Anna stated that Leo's controversy still bore repercussions at the time she composed the *Alexiad*. It can be inferred that neither Leo's *parrhesia* nor his claim that the emperors were iconoclasts, were the reason for this.[54] The

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50   William of Moerbeke's thirteenth-century Latin translation preserves the best version of the Greek text of Proklos. Plutarch, Philophonos and Michael Psellos are the main Greek sources for the text aside from Isaakos the *sebastokrator*'s excerpts. Johannes Dornseif, *Isaak Sebastokrator, Zehn Aporien über die Vorsehung* (Meisenheim-Glan, 1966); James J. Rizo, *Isaakios Sebastokrator, Περὶ τῆς τῶν κακῶν ὑποστάσεως* (*Meisenheim-Glan, 1971*); Proklos' edition: *Proklos: Tria Opuscula. Griechische Retroversion mit Kommentar*, ed. Benedikt Strobel (Berlin and Boston, 2011).

51   *Proclus: Ten Problems Concerning Providence*, trans. Jan Opsomer and Carlos Steel (London, 2014), p. 60.

52   I have not found any evidence in the secondary literature that might establish a connection between Isaakios' work and the oration by John the Oxite.

53   *Al.* 14. 7. 5–6. Paul Magdalino has emphasised that the blossoming encomiastic literature after Alexios' reign served as a significant stimulus for Anna to preserve a decent and fitting memory of her father. The eulogists of the new emperors compared John II and Manuel I to Alexios I and, as a result of dynastic development, the son and the grandson surpassed the grandfather in the eyes of the encomiasts, see: Paul Magdalino, "The Pen of the Aunt: Echoes of the Mid-twelfth Century in the *Alexiad*," in *Anna Komnene and Her Times*, ed. Thalia Gouma-Peterson (New York, 2000), pp. 15–45.

54   Alexios and his family were implicitly compared to iconoclast emperors by other critics, such as John the Oxite and Niketas of Ankyra. Although Niketas of Ankyra abdicated from

Komnenian iconoclast debate originated from the alienation of church property caused by Alexios' strategy of confronting the Norman (and later the Pecheneg) invasion. The description of the events in the *Alexiad* starts with the scene in the Hagia Sophia where Isaakios the *sebastokrator* entered and forced the *synodos endemousa* and the clergy of the Great Church to allow the rulers to confiscate church property that was no longer in use.[55] "The original proposal was passed. This became the subject of a very serious accusation against the emperors [...], not only on that occasion, but even later, right up to our own time."[56] The scanty evidence that can be culled from different sources portrays the alienation in a greater dimension.[57] Even Alexios I himself, in one of his imperial documents from July 1082, confirmed regarding the alienation that "this trespass was committed in a number of holy churches."[58] During the confiscation some bishops were seriously assaulted and sent into prison when they tried to protect the episcopal treasury.[59] In Book 5 of the *Alexiad*, Anna Komnene used every occasion to express that her father had expropriated only a small number of objects; she carefully listed the institutions that were subject to confiscation and how they were compensated for their losses.[60] Later in his reign, Alexios attempted to strengthen the financial basis of the episcopate.[61] However, compared to Alexios I's harsh treatment of the church in the first decade of his rule and taking into account his more lenient approach

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his see, John existed within the system, serving in the important position of the patriarch of Antioch. See: Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I*, pp. 268–274.

55   *Al.* 5.2.

56   *Al.* 5.2.4: 'τὰ δεδογμένα ἐκράτει. τοῦτο ὕλη μεγίστης κατηγορίας τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν ἐγένετο [...] οὐ τότε μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μέχρι καιροῦ διαρκέσασα.'

57   Leo of Chalcedon in his letter to Alexios I included the following outburst, *Letter to Alexios I*, ed. Lauriotes, "'Ιστορικὸν ζήτημα," p. 403: "If you wish to listen to the testimonies one by one: the monasteries: how many holy objects were they deprived of? The hermitages: to what extent were their decorations taken away? The sanctuaries: how much did they loose their decent outfit? [...] The poor boxes in churches shout more clearly than thousand testimonies!" ('εἰ δὲ βούλει καὶ κατὰ μέρος ἀκοῦσαι τοὺς μάρτυρας, τὰ μοναστήρια, ὅσα ἱερὰ ἐσυλήθησαν· τὰ ἀσκητήρια, ὅσα τὰ οἰκεῖον περιήρηνται κόσμον· τὰ θυσιαστήρια, ὅσα γυμνωθέντα τῆς εὐπρεπείας αὐτῶν [...] αὐτὰ τὰ κιβώτια [...] μυρίων μαρτύρων τρανότερον βοῶσιν.').

58   Georgios A. Rhalles and Michael Potles, eds., *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων*, 6 vols. (Athens, 1962²), 5: 282: 'τουτὶ μὲν τὸ ἔργον ἐν πολλαῖς τῶν ἁγίων ἐκκλησιῶν διεπράξατο.'

59   Gautier, "Diatribes," p. 31.

60   *Al.* 5.2.; 6.3.5.

61   Venance Grumel and Jean Darrouzès, eds., *Les regestes des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople, I: Les actes des patriarches, fasc. ii et iii: Les regestes de 715 à 1206* (Paris, 1989²), No. 952 for the metropolitan of Kyzikos. The emperor confirmed that prelates could collect the *kanonikon*, the tax for pastoral duties, not only from the clergy, but also from laymen. Moreover, Alexios was eager to return episcopal lands and properties that had

afterwards, Manuel I made extraordinary donations to the church in the first half of his reign.[62] The excessive concessions evoked reactions from Manuel I's ecclesiastical encomiasts.[63] Michael of Anchialos, later Patriarch of Constantinople, called on the metropolitans to extoll Manuel's lavish gifts to the church that were, in his words, visible everywhere.[64] Michael the Rhetor maintained that the *basileus* was more eager in supporting the church than any of his predecessors.[65] It is not surprising that accusations were raised against Alexios I's policies towards the Church, since it provided easy contrast to that of Manuel I.

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been given to lay and ecclesiastical owners as *kharistike*. On the topic, see Angold, *Church and Society*, pp. 45–73.

62   It has been noted that there is a change in Manuel's dealing with the church. This started from 1147 and took its final form in 1166. The Byzantine church was divided by factionalism and the young emperor realised that his involvement in the affairs of the church was necessary. From 1147 onwards, Manuel adopted the title *epistemonarches*, "chief scientific expert," in the government of the church. His interventions were occasioned by internal conflicts within the church that took shape under the guise of theological debates and were apparent from the frequent changes of patriarchs. One way in which the *basileus* attempted to gain the church's favour, especially until 1158, was through fiscal generosity. The most detailed treatment of the topic: Nikolas G. Svoronos, "Un rescrit inédit de Manuel Ier Comnène,*" in *Études sur l' organisation intérieure, la société et l' économie de l'Empire Byzantin* (London, 1973), No. vii.

63   It is noteworthy that posterity is aware of Manuel's donations to the church from the orations presented above and from references in the commentaries on canon law by Theodore Balsamon, who was also an ecclesiastic. Other encomiasts extolled Manuel's virtues, but not in the field of church policy. For another source for the campaigns of 1150–early 1151, see Manganeios Prodromos' Poems No. 41, 27, 49, 48 and especially 1 and 2. I am particularly grateful to Elisabeth and Michael Jeffreys who allowed me to consult their forthcoming edition of Manganeios Prodromos.

64   Robert Browning, "A New Source on Byzantine-Hungarian Relations in the Twelfth Century," *Balkan Studies*, 2 (1961), p. 196: "O, of what happiness, or rather to say of what largesse! [Manuel] filled all that pertains to the holy lords and he worked for them so eagerly. Come here, o height of the saintly hierarchy, who are in charge of the mystical services, all-hallowed stewards of grace, raise your voice and as with a trumpet spread the news of the imperial magnificence, of the divine zeal, of his deeds which are visible everywhere." ('ὢ πόσης εὐδαιμονίας, ἢ μᾶλλον εἰπεῖν ἀγαθουργίας, τὰ τῶν ἱερῶν ἀνακτόρων ἐνέπλησε καὶ περὶ ταῦτα δειπονήθη φιλοτιμότερον· καὶ δεῦρο ἡ τῆς θείας ἱεραρχίας ἀκρότης, οἱ τελετάρχαι τῆς μυστικῆς ἁγιστείας, οἱ παναγεῖς οἰκονόμοι τῆς χάριτος, ὑψώσατε φωνήν, ὡς ἐν σάλπιγγι τὰς αὐτοκρατορικὰς μεγαλοπρεπείας ἀνακηρύξατε, τὸν θεῖον ζῆλον, τῶν ἔργων τὴν περιφάνειαν.') The oration was recently dated to early 1151, see: Ioannis Polemis, "Notes on the Inaugural Oration of the Patriarch Michael of Anchialos," *Byzantinoslavica*, 1–2 (2011), pp. 162–172.

65   *Fontes rerum Byzantinarum, Rhetorum saeculi XII orationes politicae*, 2 vols., ed. Vasilij. E. Regel (Leipzig, 1982), 1: p. 138, l. 16: 'ὑπ' οὐδενὸς βασιλέων κατορθωθέντα μεγαλουργήματα.' The oration was delivered in 1152, see: ibid., 1: xviii.

In the autumns of 1149 and 1150, Manuel I led successful campaigns against Serbia and Hungary. Michael of Anchialos and Michael the Rhetor not only praised Manuel I as a protector of the church, but they were also the chief informants for the emperor's military operations. The churchmen praised the *basileus* for confronting an entire contingent of the enemy alone, for defeating Bakchinos, the Hungarian commander, in single combat and saving John Kantakouzenos' life. I believe that Anna Komnene's presentation of the battle of Dristra in the *Alexiad* has been influenced by this context.[66] Anna singled out similar scenes for emphasis when relating narratives about the battle: Alexios heroically rallying at and cutting through the battle line of the nomads alone when escaping the battle, defeated three Pechenegs alone and saved the life of Michael Doukas while chased by the enemy. Therefore, in my view, Anna's presentation of the battle at Dristra, the narrative unit including Leo's apparition, sought to transmit an image of Alexios I that was created through the continuous comparison with the image of Manuel I who was presented as enjoying victory upon victory and being extremely generous to the church.

4   Reactions to John the Oxite in the Alexiad

This context of emulation likely effected various assessments of the reign of Alexios. It is probable that critiques which had been raised against Alexios during his reign surfaced again. And that it was not only the confiscation of church property, about which we have Anna's direct testimony, that disparaged the image of the late Alexios. It can be inferred from indirect statements in the *Alexiad* that John the Oxite's claim that Alexios' conduct had entailed God's punishment was also circulating in the twelfth century. Anna Komnene seems to counter the critique of the Antiochene Patriarch. In her closing remarks on Alexios' Pecheneg campaigns, the princess admitted that "God humbled the pride of the Romans" upon the occasion of the battle of Dristra.[67] Anna quoted

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66   The question requires a more detailed treatment, which would surpass the limits of the paper. I plan to publish my views in a separate article.

67   *Al.* 8.5.8–9: "A whole people, not numbered in tens of thousands, but in countless multitudes, with their women and children, was utterly wiped out on that day […] and many also had been taken captive […] It was an amazing sight to anyone who recollects how in the old days our soldiers left Byzantium to fight these Scyths, buying ropes and leather thongs with which to bind their Scythian prisoners, only to be captured themselves and put into chains by the enemy. That was what happened when we fought them near Dristra, for on that occasion God humbled the pride of the Romans; but later, at the time I am now dealing with […] he [God] granted them the victory beyond all expectation, so that

the same *Psalm* 19 almost literally (my italics below), as John the Oxite did in his address, but with a different emphasis. John the Oxite used the passage to prove that Alexios did not have confidence in God, but rather in his army. Anna's account argues to the contrary. On the eve of Alexios' final victory over the nomads near Lebounion in 1091, the entire army walked with torches and sang hymns beseeching God for help. Anna Komnene noticed the following:

> The fact that the emperor did not believe he could attack the enemy without the help of God is proof, I think, of his piety, for *his confidence was stayed neither on men, nor on horses, nor on machines of war, but all his faith was placed in the power of the Lord on High.*[68]

Throughout Book 7 and 8, in which Alexios' conflict with the Pechenegs is presented, the princess emphasises the role of God's help. In the battle of Dristra and until the end of the war, the name of God, providence and divine intervention systematically recur.[69] The reader of Anna's account of Alexios' Pecheneg

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they enchained and massacred and took captive their enemies." ('ἔθνος ὅλον, οὐ μυριάνθρωπον, ἀλλ' ἀριθμὸν ἅπαντα ὑπερβαῖνον, σὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ τέκνοις ἄρδην κατὰ ταυτηνὶ τὴν ἡμέραν ἀπολωλός [...] πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ ζωγρίᾳ ἐλήφθησαν [...] καὶ ἦν τῷ κατανοοῦντι θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι πῶς οἱ πάλαι κατὰ τῶν Σκυθῶν ἐξερχόμενοι καλῴδια τοῦ Βυζαντίου ἐξωνούμενοι καὶ ἱμάντας, δι' ὧν δεσμώτας ἄγοιεν τοὺς τῶν Σκυθῶν ἑαλωκότας, τοὐναντίον πεπόνθασιν αὐτοὶ τὲ παρὰ τῶν Σκυθῶν ἑαλωκότες καὶ δεσμῶται γενόμενοι. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν τότε, ὁπηνίκα κατὰ τὴν Δρίστραν ὁ μετὰ τῶν Σκυθῶν γέγονε πόλεμος· καὶ γὰρ τὸ φρύαγμα τότε τῶν Ῥωμαίων καθεῖλε Θεός. ἐν ὑστέροις δέ, καθ' ὃν ὑφηγοῦμαι καιρόν, ὁπηνίκα περιδεεῖς τούτους ἔγνω καὶ τὰς σωζούσας ἀπολωλεκότας ἐλπίδας πρὸς τοσαῦτα πλήθη μὴ ἐξισχύοντας, τὴν νίκην παραδόξως ἐχαρίσατο τούτοις, ὡς καὶ δεσμεῖν καὶ σφάττειν καὶ ζωγρίαν ἄγειν τοὺς Σκύθας.').

68   *Al.* 8.5.3: 'ἐκ τούτου δ' οἶμαι τεκμαίρεσθαι χρὴ τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως εὐσέβειαν, ὡς ἄρα τὰς πρὸς ἐχθροὺς προσβολὰς οὐκ ἐδόκει ποιεῖν ἄνευ τῆς ἐκεῖθεν ἐπαρωγῆς· *οὐ γὰρ ἐν ἀνδράσι καὶ ἵπποις καὶ στρατηγικαῖς μηχαναῖς καὶ οὗτος ἐθάρρει, ἀλλὰ τὸ πᾶν τῇ ἄνω ῥοπῇ ἐδίδου.*'

69   Before the battle, despite the fact that a number of military actions took place, God's name is mentioned only twice: first in the description of the Younger Bryennios' *ethos*, and second, during the negotiations with the nomads (*Al.* 7.2.6 and 7.2.7). In the battle of Dristra Alexios I is portrayed with the *maphorion* of the Theotokos in his hands, which creates the impression of Mary's tutelage of the *basileus*, or at least the ruler's intention to have the Theotokos as his guardian (*Al.* 7.3.9). Alexios begins his escape from the battle, rushing upon the enemy and cutting through the Scythian lines, with a call for God's help (*Al.* 7.3.10). After the ruler's escape, Georgios Palaiologos flees from the hands of the pursuing Pechenegs with divine intervention, through the personage of Leo of Chalcedon (*Al.* 7.4.1). Book 8 opens with Alexios' victory at Cheirobachoi, where he rode out with the help of God (*Al.* 8.1–3). Before the final clash with the nomads at Lebounion, the Byzantine army forms great procession to beg for divine aid (*Al.* 8.5.3–4). The account of the Pecheneg wars ended with the battle of Lebounion. Alexios successfully defeated the Pechenegs in Cuman alliance and the princess attributed the victory to God.

campaigns has the impression that the emperor proved to be superior at the
end, because God helped him. Leo of Chalcedon's apparition should be read as
an important element in this series of events that meant to testify God' s sup-
port. Moreover, if Leo's scene is read in the light of John the Oxite's charges,
certain elements seem to be countered by the presence of Leo's apparition in
Anna's description.

First, the presence of Leo's scene in the battle is in contrast with John the
Oxite's critique on the lack of miracles since Alexios' enter to power. A reader
of the *Alexiad* would have a different impression. By and large, Anna recorded
only a few miraculous events that, nevertheless, did not end with Alexios' ac-
cession.[70] Second, the princess put particular emphasis on the participation
and bravery of Alexios' close family members when presenting the battle of
Dristra. The description covers five subchapters in in Book 7 (7.3.5–7.3.9). Of
these subchapters only one gives information about what happened in the
battle (7.3.8), and one deals with the preparations (7.3.5). The other three are
dedicated to members of the Komnenian family: one to the deeds and escape
of Alexios I (7.3.9), and two to other family members (7.3.7–8). Anna related
the details of the battle lines and singled out those who were present in the
battle one by one. The "catalogue" of blood relatives in the description of the
battle of Dristra gives the reader the impression that they played the only role
in the battle and that their efforts were more than heroic.[71] This is in sharp
contrast with John the Oxite's fiery oration, which saw the Komnenian family
policy as an administrative disaster for the empire and Alexios' relatives as a
group raising God's wrath. Leo of Chalcedon's intervention further adds to

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70   Anna Komnene recorded the following miraculous events: the apparition of John, the
      Evangelist to Alexios at Karpianos, on the eve of Alexios' accession (*Al.* 2. 7.4–7); the ap-
      parition of Demetrios of Thessalonike in Alexios' dream foretelling the *basileus*' victory
      over Bohemond (*Al.* 5.5.6.); the apparition of John the Evangelist in a dream to Basil, ep-
      arch of Constantinople (*Al.* 12.4.1–4); and the apparition of Leo of Chalcedon to George
      Palaiologos. The apparitions of Demetrios to Alexios and John the Evangelist to Basil in
      dreams both have the narrative function of underlining Alexios' destiny of prevailing over
      the Norman threat. Demetrios' apparition is presented in connection to Alexios' battle
      and victory over Bohemond's forces in April 1083. On the interpretation of these events,
      see: Magdalino, "The Historiography of Dreaming in Medieval Byzantium," p. 133.

71   This can be explained by the fact that throughout the *Alexiad*, the chronicler portrays
      Alexios I in the circle of people "related to the emperor by blood and marriage" ('τῶν ἐξ
      αἵματος καὶ ἀγχιστείας [τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος]'). Anna depicts an imperial family united
      around Alexios, without bringing attention to internal tensions, thereby stressing the ca-
      pability of her father to maintain a balance within the larger imperial family, which was
      also challenging to Alexios' successors. On the topic, see: P. Frankopan, "Distribution of
      Power," p. 14.

Anna's catalogue on the question of religiosity and clearly conveys that God's wrath was out of the question.

Furthermore, the apparition scenario also balances the image of Alexios as confiscator of church valuables. In Book 5, Anna Komnene portrays Leo of Chalcedon as a harsh, arrogant, uneducated prelate. In the aftermath of the battle of Dristra, Leo was cast as a simple-minded and genuine person who was banished only due to his inexperience in canon law. The spokesperson against imperial confiscation is portrayed as a holy man who supports the imperial family. Those characteristics of Leo are centred such that the image of Alexios as heavy-handed with the church cannot be supported.[72]

5   The Apparition Scene as Part of Anna Komnene's "Double Argumentation"

Thus, I argue that Anna Komnene tried to refute the claims that her father had been impious. Furthermore, I believe that she made counterarguments on two levels. The first level is the one I have presented so far: promoting an image of a pious *basileus* and a religious imperial family. The apparition of Leo pertains to this level of reasoning: rebutting John's claims by using part of the world-views of the prelate and reflecting upon his and probably other contemporaries' theory of God's punishment of Byzantium.[73] However, a closer look at Anna Komnene's closing authorial comment on Leo's apparition scenario may suggest a different approach to the events by the princess. After narrating the apparition and giving a short overview of Leo's character, Anna Komnene closed the scene with the following words: "I do not know[74] whether Palaiologos merited a divine apparition, because he so fiercely believed in that man, or

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72   The apparent contradiction between Leo of Chalcedon's portrayal in Book 5 and Book 7 can be explained with the difference between the view of Anna who disliked the prelate (Book 5) and that of the Doukai and Leo's other supporters (Book 7) who considered Leo a holy man. Peter Frankopan bolsters this idea: P. Frankopan, "Aristocratic Family Narratives," pp. 331–332. Anna arranged her sources material in a way that sometimes antagonising elements remained in the text which has already been noted: Buckley, *Alexiad*, p. 156, see also Chapter 4 of my dissertation: P. Bara, *Paideia, Prelates, Politics. Observations on the Sources, Background, and Legacy of the Komnenian Iconoclasm*, PhD diss. (Szeged, 2019).

73   This led Penelope Buckley to evaluate Leo's apparition scenario as "traditional" and to assess Anna as a historian accepting that worldview.

74   An elliptic expression also added by Kambylis and Reinsch.

the divine providence demonstrated something else, a secret thing, by means of this bishop."[75]

The central phrase of the passage from our point of view is "the secret thing," the ἀπόρρητον of providence that was demonstrated through this bishop. The comparison of Anna's presentation of the battle of Dristra with the methodology of the polymath Michael Psellos (1018–ca. 1081) as a historian, casts light on Anna's method of writing history and suggests that the *Alexiad* is a more complex text than previously acknowledged.[76]

The word ἀπόρρητον was used by Michael Psellos to denote biblical and Christian mysteries and to describe the secrets of profane learning.[77] As a historian, Psellos claimed that all events depend on divine providence.[78] This could mislead the reader into thinking Psellos simply attributes the cause of all events to God alone. However, another passage in his *Chronographia* gives insight into his more complex method of writing history. According to Psellos, a historian must be a poet, orator, and a philosopher at the same time to provide an adequate account of events.[79] The task of the philosopher is to find the rational causes (αἰτίαι ἔμφρονες) that lay behind the events that the polymath called "the most public mystery."

Psellos used his skills in all three fields to form a narrative on Michael V Kalaphates' (r. 1041–1042) reign and the revolt that led to his deposition. His method of solving the "most public mystery" was exactly what he described as the task of the philosopher: to find out the immediate causes of events. In the case

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75 *Al.* 7.4.1, 'εἴτε οὖν διὰ τὴν θερμοτάτην πίστιν τὴν εἰς τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον ὁ Παλαιολόγος θείας ἔτυχεν ἐπιφανείας, εἴτ' ἄλλό τι ἦν τῆς προνοίας ἀπόρρητον κατὰ τουτονὶ τὸν ἀρχιερέα τὸ φαινόμενον.'

76 Probably, the most influential author of the 11th century whose works had already entered the literary canon in the 12th century was Michael Psellos. An important shift in the transmission of Psellos' texts took place between the 1130s and 1150s and a particularly Psellian intellectual mode was in vogue. Anna Komnene was a central figure in this development; she used Psellos' works in the *Alexiad*, most extensively the *Chronographia*. On the topic, see: Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 225; Stratis Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos. Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 254–259, esp. 256. On Anna's use of the *Chronographia*, see: *Al.* 2: 266–268.

77 *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, eds. Paul Magdalino and Maria Mavroudi (Geneva, 2007), p. 16.

78 *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*, 2 vols., ed. Diether R. Reinsch (Berlin, 2014), 1: ch. 4.30 (*Chron.* hereafter): Ἐγὼ δὲ εἰωθὼς εἰς τὴν τοῦ θείου πρόνοιαν τὰς περὶ τῶν μειζόνων διοικήσεις ἀνάγειν, ἢ μᾶλλον καὶ τἄλλα ἐκείνης ἐξαρτῶν ὁπόσα, μὴ παρατραπείσης ἡμῖν τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἕξεως, γίνεται.' On the interpretation of the passage with particular respect to the role of providence and human nature, see: Anthony Kaldellis, *The Argument in Psellos' Chronographia* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 101–109.

79 *Chron.* 5.24.3–16.

of Michael v, that rather than providence, Psellos notes, Michael's *ethos* was the cause of his actions and his expulsion of Zoe from the palace, which in turn brought about his downfall. The example of the naval battle of 1043 between Constantine ix Monomachos and the invading Rus is also instructive, illustrating that natural causes could also lay behind the events of human history.[80]

Anna Komnene made a statement in *Book 1* of the *Alexiad* that suggests a similar approach to history. Assessing the rise of Robert of Guiscard, she wrote: "I must show […] to what heights of power the force of circumstances raised him, or rather, to speak more reverently, how far Providence allowed him to advance, indulging his ill-natured ambitions and scheming."[81]

It is noteworthy, on the one hand, that when narrating the events of Alexios' campaigns against the Pechenegs, Anna emphasises the role of divine help, especially after the battle of Dristra, as I have already discussed. On the other hand, in a number of passages, the princess gave a highly pragmatic reason for the events, or concluded that the emperor was forced by necessity.[82] Alexios, for instance, was not able to occupy the locality of Dristra, because the nomads defended it from a hilltop.[83] The battle of Dristra was evenly balanced until the Byzantines became outnumbered with the arrival of 36 000 Pechenegs.[84] Two passages regarding Anna's presentation of the events are particularly instructive. First, after the initial clashes and Nikolaos Maurokatakalon's victory, the *basileus* launched his campaign against the nomads leading an army himself and sending George Euphorbenos with the fleet via the Danube.[85] The Pechenegs realised that they could not fight a two-front war and therefore negotiated for peace. Alexios, using the eclipse of the Sun, rejected the request from the Pecheneg envoys and had them brought to the capital as prisoners. The nomads, however, killed their guards and escaped. Alexios immediately began his march against the Pechenegs. The emperor's plan was to defeat the Pechenegs step-by-step by facing smaller contingents one at a time. Anna singled out: "Unlike Atreus' son Agamemnon, he needed no dream to urge him to battle–he was longing for a fight. With his troops, he crossed Sidera and set up

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80   *Chron.* 6.94–95; Kaldellis, *Argument*, p. 107.

81   *Al.* 1.10.3: 'πρότερον δεῖ τὸν λόγον τὰ περὶ τούτου διηγήσασθαι […] εἰς οἷον κράτος καὶ ὕψος ἡ φορὰ τῶν πραγμάτων τοῦτον ἀνήνεγκε, μᾶλλον δε, ἵν' εὐσεβέστερτον φαίην, οὗ παρεχώρησε τοῦτον ἡ πρόνοια προελθεῖν ἐνδοῦσα πρὸς τὰς ἐκείνου κακοτρόπους ὁρμάς τε καὶ μηχανάς.'

82   The analysis on the role of necessity (ἀνάγκη) in Anna Komnene's theory of history is a *desideratum*.

83   *Al.* 7.3.2.

84   *Al.* 7.3.9.

85   *Al.* 7.2.7–7.3.1.

camp near the Bitzina river."[86] The *basileus* decided that he had to fight, which, to the reader, may seem to be a logical consequence of the events detailed by the princess. Anna Komnene stressed that the *basileus* had been propelled by the circumstances; he would have otherwise faced such a multitude of the enemy that he would have been defeated. Compared to Anna's viewpoint, Theophylaktos of Ohrid, the court rhetorician, presented the same event as hotheadedness in an oration delivered approximately a year after the battle.[87] The classical imagery used by Anna made it needless to involve the divine in military decision-making. The figure of the dreaming Agamemnon (Homeros, *Ilias*, 2.1–95), urged by a command of Zeus to launch an attack against the Trojans, is referenced here. Compared to the Alexios of Book 5 having a vision of the martyr Demetrios and attacking the Normans afterwards, the Alexios presented here is less pious and is rather led by reason. Anna seems, at times, therefore, to reject the role of the divine in the decision-making, and further too do so using pagan, not Christian, imagery.

The other example is the loss of the *omophorion* of the Blachernai Theotokos at the end of the battle at Dristra.[88] This obviously delicate issue is worded in the most straightforward way, giving the impression that there was no place for divinity. Strong winds blew and Alexios was physically unable to hold the standard. Moreover, one of the Scyths struck the emperor on his buttocks. The wind and the excruciating pain together hindered the *basileus* from bringing the relic further and he hid it among the bushes. In the light of the passage, in which John the Oxite suggested praying to the Theotokos of the Blachernai and proceed throughout the walls of the Queen of the cities, as it happened in 860, the presentation of Alexios' struggle and the loss of the relic conveys a clear message: despite the fact that Alexios brought the relic to war, non-divine circumstances prevailed. This is Anna Komnene's "scientific" explanation, as a historian, of the high and low points of her father's Pecheneg campaigns. This interpretation was produced almost 60 years after the first reactions, as attested by John the Oxite's oration, and presumably, by Isaakios the *sebastokrator*'s interest in Proklos' ten *Aporiai* concerning providence. It is reasonable to

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86   *Al.* 7.3.1, 'οὐκ ὀνείρου δεηθεὶς πρὸς μάχην αὐτὸν ἐποτρύνοντος καθάπέρ ποτε τὸν Ἀτρέως Ἀγαμέμνονα, ἀλλ' ἀναξέσας πρὸς μάχην καὶ τὴν Σιδηρᾶν μετὰ τῶν ταγμάτων διελθὼν τὸν χάρακα περὶ τὴν Βιτζίναν ἐπήξατο.'

87   Paul Gautier, "Le discours," p. 219, l. 14–16. Theophylaktos of Ohrid accused Alexios I of hotheadedness and of poor decision-making that was guided by his desires. I am convinced that Anna Komnene also reacted to Theophylaktos of Ohrid's critique. I plan to address Anna's presentation of the battle of Dristra in more detail in a forthcoming article.

88   *Al.* 7.3.9.

conclude that Anna Komnene did not agree with the view that God punished Byzantium during Alexios' Pecheneg campaigns. The princess, in my view, refuted this statement, arguing on the first level by using elements of the worldview of John the Oxite, whose critiques may have prompted her explanation. On the second level, Anna Komnene narrated the events in a way that presumably aligned with her own views on the naissance of history and using methods comparable to those of Michael Psellos.

6   Conclusion

Why did Anna Komnene transmit a family account about George Palaiologos, an apparition scenario, as part of her description of the Battle of Dristra? Furthermore, how does the present analysis contribute to the debate about Byzantium as a static and ossified system? With this passage, another aspect of the Komnenian Iconoclast debate was stressed: its spokesperson, Leo of Chalcedon, aided the imperial family. This was a narrative that required elaboration as opposed to brief allusion, since Anna's audience was acquainted with an image of Alexios as a poor defender of the Church in contrast to his generous grandson Manuel. Moreover, the princess refuted the prevailing view that God punished Alexios I during the Pecheneg campaigns by presenting a close family member in receipt of divine help. This reading offers an alternative to Penelope Buckley's interpretation that Anna Komnene accepted the narrative of divine punishment first propagated by John the Oxite. Anna shows instead that mundane circumstances did lead to catastrophe at Dristra. Regarding the second question, the focus of the present volume, Anna Komnene's reuse of a family narrative of the Doukai proves how creatively Byzantine authors transmitted their own inheritance. The princess used a highly traditional Byzantine hagiographical account, embedded it into a sophisticated narrative framework to broadcast a message which was undoubtedly a novelty or *kainotomia*: not only the agency of Divine Providence, but the simple sequence of events effects the course of history.

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PART 3

Contact

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The Evidence of Byzantine *Sgraffito Wares* in 12th-Century Sicily

A Case Study in Economic and Socio-cultural Connections between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and Komnenian Greece?

Matteo G. Randazzo

1   Introduction[1]

The Norman Kingdom of Sicily (1130–1194) was established in 1130, when Roger II Hauteville unified the territories that his father and uncle, the Count Roger and the Duke Robert Guiscard, had acquired in Southern Italy.[2] The new-born Kingdom, gathering a multi-ethnic and multi-religious population of Greeks, Latins, Jews, and Muslims, has often been considered a paradigm of cosmo-politanism, *conviventia*, and social syncretism.[3] Its capital and centre of power was Palermo.

In historical records, the connections between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Komnenian Empire are mostly characterised as one of hostility and friction.[4] Conflict, which had already begun in the late 11th century with the diplomatic and military skirmishes between Robert Guiscard and Alexius Komnenos, reached a peak in the mid-12th century. In the second Crusade of

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1 I owe my acknowledgment to Dr. B. Russell for the critical proofreading of the text. I wish to thank Prof. L. Arcifa, Prof. J. Crow, and Dr. A. Alfano for their invaluable comments and bib-liographical suggestions. I also wish to thank Prof. J. Vroom, who inspired this research after a chat in Antalya in September 2015. Finally, I owe my deepest thanks to M. Riso, for her persistent support, reading this paper innumerable times and providing valuable observa-tions that have no doubt improved the general content of my study. I take full responsibilities for any mistakes that may remain.

2 The coronation of Henry VI Staufen in 1194 (the father of the future emperor Frederick II) marked the end of the Kingdom. Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 9–67.

3 Hubert Houben, *Roger II of Sicily. A Ruler between East and West* (Cambridge, 2002) p.35, p.112, p.132, p.180 (hereafter cited as Houben).

4 See the chapter "Against Byzantium" in John Julius Norwich, *The Normans in the South 1061–1130* (London, 1967). More recently: Paul Magdalino, "The empire of the Komnenoi (1118–1204)", in *The Cambridge history of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492* ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 627–663.

1147, during the reign of Manuel Komnenos, Roger II led an expedition into Byzantine Greece, storming and pillaging Athens, Thebes, and Corinth on the way. One year later Manuel counterattacked and, supported by the Venetian fleet, defeated the Normans in Adriatic waters. In turn, in 1149, the Normans entered into the harbour of Constantinople, plundering the suburbs of the city. Even as late as the reign of the last Komnenian Emperor Andronikos, Roger II's grandson, William II, captured Thessaloniki by taking advantage of a period of internal strife surrounding the imperial succession, before being defeated by the new Emperor Isaac Angelos.[5]

Through the study of *Sgraffito Ware* (henceforth SW), a specific category of 12th-century Byzantine tableware mainly crafted in Peloponnesian and Euboean "professional" workshops (especially Corinth and Chalkis-Thebes), the aim of this chapter is to present an antithetic picture of connectedness, in which Byzantium re-emerges as a vibrant and global culture.[6] It will do so by attempting to shed some light on the possible economic connections (that is *how*) and socio-cultural reasons (*why*?) that may lay behind the circulation of SW between Norman Sicily and Komnenian Greece. Even though bulk-exchange is the main indicator of the scale of economic systems,[7] SW are special devices for establishing economic patterns and socio-cultural connections, affording a deeper understanding of the reasons and mechanisms for their demand, diffusion, and distribution. On the one hand, the cargo of shipwrecks like the mid-12th-century Alonessos-Pelagonessos, in which more than 600 glazed tableware (mainly SW) appear, implies that these items were traded

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5   Matthew, "The Norman Kingdom", pp. 276–78. Magdalino, "The empire", pp. 637–655.

6   For the technical features of SW see: Dimitra Papanikola-Bakirtzi, *Byzantine Glazed Ceramics. The Art of Sgraffito* (Athens, 1999), pp. 17–19. For the dating of the production to between ca. 1130 and 1200: Guy Sanders, "Corinth Workshop Production", in *Byzantine Glazed Ceramics. The Art of Sgraffito*, ed. Dimitra Papanikola-Bakirtzi (Athens, 1999), pp. 159–164. Traditional scholarship has seen Corinth as the major centre of production of SW. Recently, a remarkable series of workshops which manufactured significant volumes of SW have been found in Chalkis (the port of Thebes), see: Yona Waksman, et al. "The main 'Middle Byzantine Production' and pottery manufacture in Thebes and Chalcis", *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, Vol. 109 (2014), pp. 379–422. See also Joanita Vroom's talk at the 12th AIECM3 Congress on Medieval and Modern Mediterranean Ceramics (Athens, 22nd–27th of October 2018) "Pottery finds from Byzantine and Frankish Chalkis (ca. 11th–13th centuries AD)" https://aiecm3athens2018.arch.uoa.gr/en/program/. At the same conference, Waksman demonstrated that numerous samples of SW thus far believed to have originated in Corinth, were actually manufactured in Chalkis, indicating the importance of the latter: Yona Waksman et al. "The contribution of archaeometry to the study of Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery production in Thebes" (web site as above). Because products from Chalkis are morphologically similar to those from Corinth, the lack of petrographic analyses from the Sicilian samples prevents an assignation to specific workshops.

7   Chris Wickham, "The Mediterranean around 800: On the Brink of the Second Trade Cycle", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 58 (2004), 161–174.

due to their intrinsic value and not for their contents.[8] On the other hand, the tendency of SW to imitate metalwares enjoyed by the upper classes has recently led Papanikola-Bakirtzi to suggest that this category of tableware should be considered a 'semiluxury' production, "most likely intended for upwardly mobile sections of the population, whose economic position and aesthetic sensibilities led them to desire and purchase items that resembled those enjoyed by the upper classes".[9]

In order to investigate how samples of SW produced in Komnenian Greece may have reached Norman Sicily, economic processes of production and distribution of this and other categories of 12th-century tableware will be considered within broader Mediterranean patterns of production, consumption, and trading activities. Regarding socio-cultural implications, Sicily had no practical need for importing tableware, being itself a centre of production of good quality glazed tablewares that not only were able to meet local demand, but also to support systematic interregional exports. This being noted, the import of SW to Sicily is somewhat surprising. Could this apparently 'unnecessary' interregional circulation of tablewares be due to a local (though marginal) conscious demand? And, if so, can socio-cultural reasons, varying according to the different ethnicity of the consumers, be conjured up in order to explain it? I will try to answer these questions by considering the regional distribution of SW within the multiethnic substrata of the Sicilian consumers as they surface through historical and archaeological data, after offering a systematic review of the record of evidence of SW from Sicily.

2 SW in Norman Sicily: Preliminary Issues and Close Examination of the Ceramic Finds

This is the first study to focus systematically on the evidence of SW from Sicily and, due to the scattered nature of the archaeological record on which I had to rely, this research can only be considered as work-in-progress. In sharp contrast to the Italian mainland, where the study of Middle and Late Byzantine Glazed Ware (henceforth BGW) is well-developed,[10] our

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8   Joanita Vroom, "Byzantine Sea Trade in Ceramics: Some Case Studies in the Eastern Mediterranean (ca. Seventh-Fourteenth Centuries)", in *Trade in Byzantium*, eds. Paul Magdalino and Nevra Necipoğlu (Istanbul, 2016), pp. 157–177.

9   Dimitra Papanikola-Bakirtzi, "Byzantine Glazed Ceramics on the Market. An Approach", in *Trade and Market in Byzantium*, ed. Cecile Morrisson (Washington DC, 2012), pp. 193–218.

10   Sauro Gelichi, "La ceramica bizantina in Italia e ceramica italiana nel Mediterraneo Orientale tra XII e XIII secolo: stato degli studi e proposte di ricerca", in *La ceramica nel*

understanding of these tablewares in Sicily is still in its infancy. As Franco D'Angelo stated in 2009, as recently as one decade ago scholars believed that 12th-century SW had never reached this island;[11] the map of SW distribution that I. Dimopoulos published in 2009, in which no evidence is recorded from Sicily, clearly demonstrated the status of the archaeological research at that point (Fig. 9.1).[12]

Since 2009 new evidence of 12th-century SW has surfaced in Sicily, and now there is a total of four sites yielding this category of Byzantine tableware: Palermo, Messina, Paternò, and Piazza Armerina/Casale, (Fig. 9.2). Altogether, the published sherds of SW from these four sites account for no more than a handful of samples (eight, to be precise), to which a further 18 unpublished samples from Messina should be added.[13] Even though this number may sound insignificant, by considering the most recent maps of distribution of Middle BGW, it becomes clear that it is not. In fact, as recently as 2016 (though the map is from 2011), Sicily appears still blank, while the evidence from other areas of the Italian Peninsula, like Veneto, Apulia, Campania, is well documented (Fig. 9.3).[14] This absence of evidence from Sicily underlies the biases of archaeological research and, in this scenario, albeit 'only' four sites and a few samples, these finds do matter and do make a difference.[15]

mondo bizantino tra XI e XV secolo e i suoi rapporti con l'Italia, ed. Sauro Gelichi (Florence, 1993), pp. 9–46. More recently: Erica D'Amico, "Byzantine Finewares in Italy (10th to 14th centuries AD.): social and economic contexts in the Mediterranean world", in *Proceedings of the IX AIECM2*, ed. Sauro Gelichi (Florence, 2012), pp. 473–479.

11   Franco D'Angelo, "Sicilia XII secolo: importazioni dal Mediterraneo orientale, importazioni dal Mediterraneo occidentale, produzioni locali", in *Proceedings of the IX AIECM2*, ed. Sauro Gelichi (Florence, 2012), pp. 178–180.

12   Ioanna Dimopoulos, "Trade of Byzantine Red Wares", in *Byzantine Trade 4th–12th Centuries: The Archaeology of Local, Regional and International Exchange, ed.* Marlia Mango (Oxford, 2009), pp. *179–190.*

13   Elvira D'Amico mentions these samples from an excavation in Messina, Liceo La Farina, in her poster "*A group of Glazed Slip Tableware with green decoration from Messina*" presented at the 12th AIECM3, Congress on Medieval and Modern Mediterranean Ceramics (Athens, 22nd–27th of October 2018). Neither photos nor drawings are provided. Similar information can be read, without numerical references, at p. 258, note no. 19 in Elvira D'Amico, "Alcune ceramiche invetriate di età normanna da Messina", in *Atti del L Convegno Internazionale della Ceramica* (Florence, 2018), pp. 255–261.

14   Véronique François, "A distribution Atlas of Byzantine Ceramics: A New Approach to the Pottery Trade in Byzantium", in *Trade in Byzantium*, eds. Paul Magdalino and Nevra Necipoğlu (Istanbul, 2016), pp. 143–156. The same map in Véronique François, *La vaiselle de terre à Byzance: catalogue des collection du muse du Louvre* (Paris, 2018).

15   Regarding quantities, the distribution of SW in other regions of the Italian Peninsula is uneven, with numbers ranging from several hundred (at Veneto) to only one sample (from Rome). In general, see Sauro Gelichi, "La ceramica bizantina". See also next the sections of this paper.

FIGURE 9.1   Distribution map of Byzantine Sgraffito published in 2009 (after I. Dimopoulos, "Trade," Fig. 12.1. [updated with evidence from Southern Italy according to E. D'Amico, "Byzantine Finewares," fig. 4])
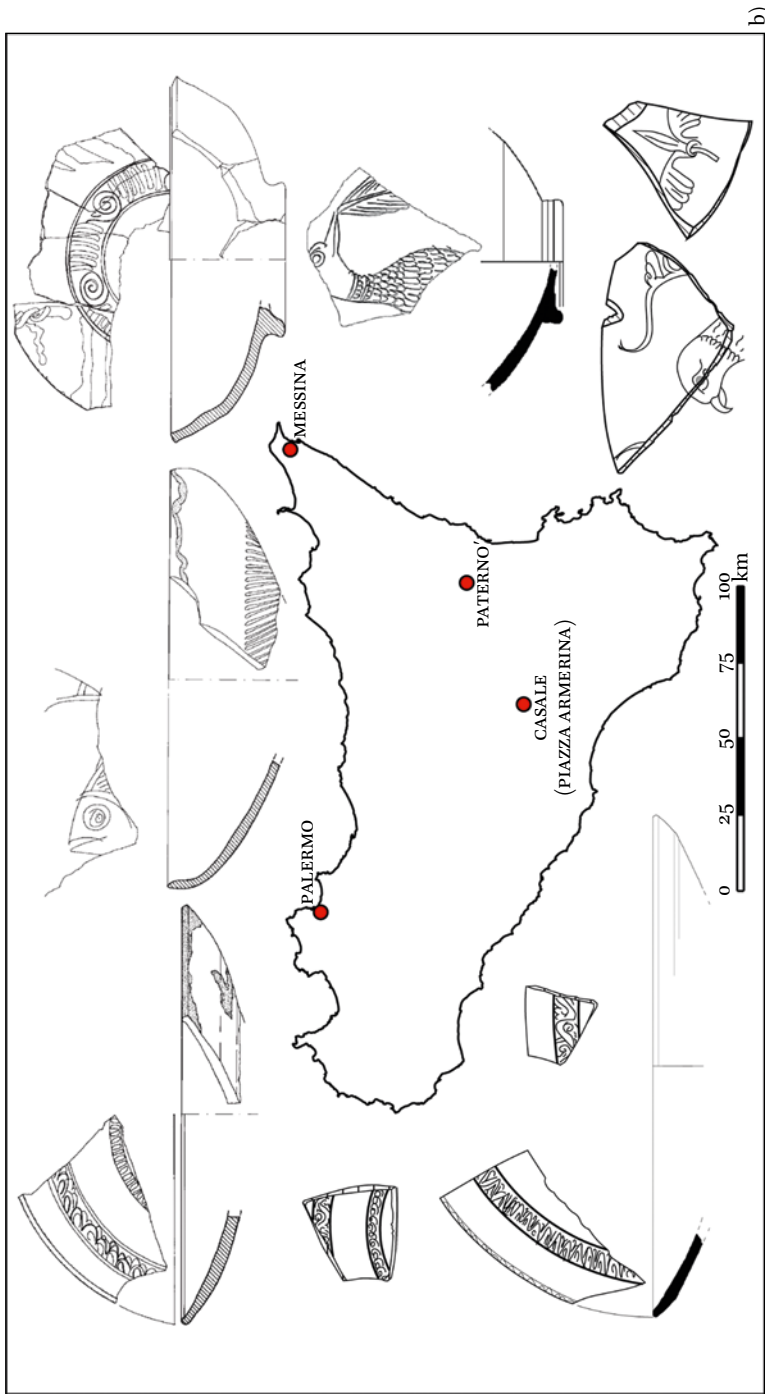
b)

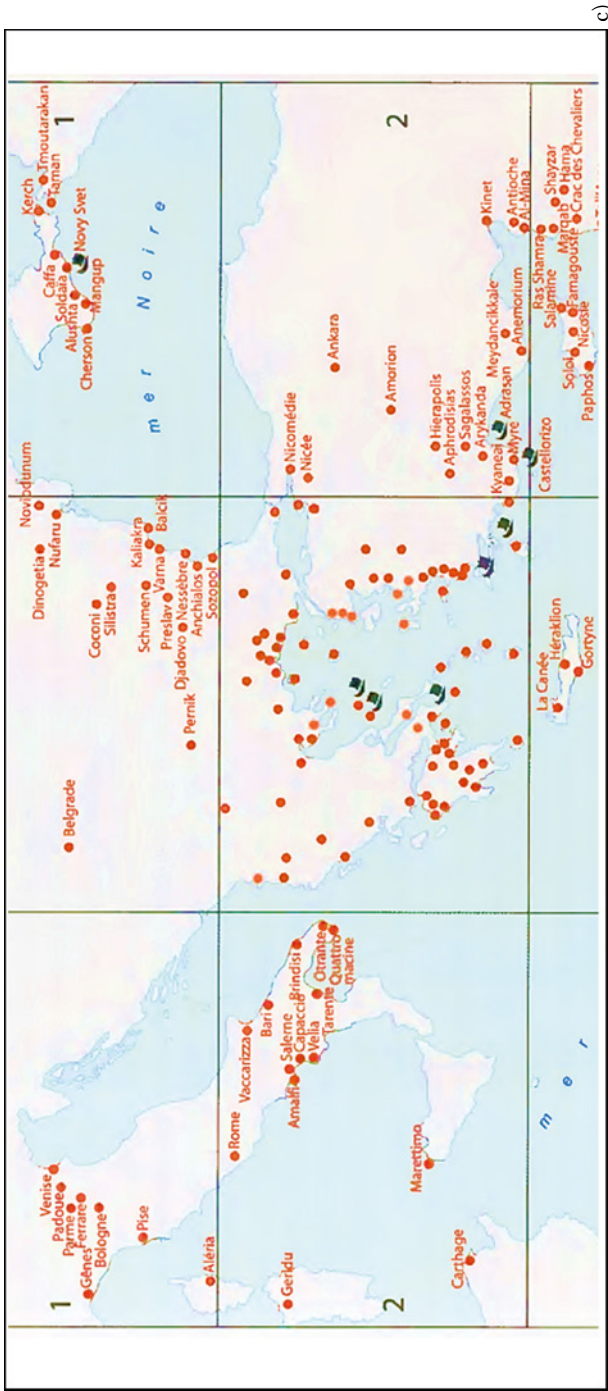FIGURE 9.2　Distribution map of Byzantine Sgraffito Ware in Sicily (M. Randazzo)

FIGURE 9.3 Circulation of Byzantine tableware from Macedonian to Palaiologan period (after V. François, "A distribution Atlas", Map 1. (the evidence from Western Sicily is one sherd of Constantinopolitan Glazed White Ware IV dating to the thirteeth century))

In the following descriptions of the samples of SW found in Palermo, Messina, Paternò, and Piazza Armerina, the names of decorative styles and patterns follow the nomenclature given in Corinth XI.[16]

Palermo. It is not surprising to find such pottery in Palermo, the capital and richest city of the former Islamic Emirate and latter Norman Kingdom of Sicily. Recently, urban archaeology in Palermo has thrived, and the contexts shedding light on its urban fabric from Byzantine to Norman period are several.[17] Thus far, however, only one sherd of SW Medallion Style comes from this city, from the excavation at Castello San Pietro (Fig. 9.4a).[18] Two concentric bands are preserved. The incised curly coils along the inner narrow band find a precise parallel with the sample no. 1379 found in Corinth.[19] The outer band, bearing a pattern of 'degenerated running spiral', is more generally comparable with Morgan's motive 'E'.[20]

Messina. Messina was the second most important city of Norman Sicily, venue of the royal mint (alongside Palermo), seat of a metropolitan see and, with its port, a crucial economic hub between the Western and Eastern Mediterranean.[21] The core of the Sicilian Greek population resided in this city and surrounding mountainous areas (known as Val Demone).[22] A total number of at least 21 samples of SW come from a series of archaeological excavations across the city. However, only three samples have been published, from excavations within the yard of the modern city hall.[23]

One bowl (Fig. 9.4b), with the opening at the mouth of 21 cm, is a Painted-*Sgraffito*: in the single circular band, groups of six/seven painted vertical bars are alternated to one incised spiral; in the field just above the band, brown

16   Charles Morgan, *Corinth XI. The Byzantine Pottery* (Princeton, 1942) (hereafter cited as Morgan).

17   In general see papers in Annliese Nef, *A Companion to Medieval Palermo. The History of a Mediterranean City from 600 to 1500* (Leiden-Boston, 2013).

18   Lucia Arcifa, "Ceramiche città e commerci in Sicilia: il caso di Palermo", in *Città, Ceramiche e Commerci nell'Italia Tardo-Medievale*, ed. Sauro Gelichi (Mantova, 1998), pp. 89–107. Fig. 8, no. 1. I could not have direct access to this sherd. I wish to thank Prof. L. Arcifa for having provided me with the photo of this sample.

19   Morgan, Plate XLVII, a.

20   Morgan, p. 33, fig. 2. Cf. Assi *Dina, "The Byzantine shipwreck at Pelagonessos-Alonessos"*, in *Byzantine Glazed Ceramics. The Art of Sgraffito*, ed. Dimitra Papanikola-Bakirtzi (Athens, 1999)*, pp. 122–142.

21   Giacomo Scibona, "Messina XI–XII secc.: primi dati di storia urbana dallo scavo del Municipio", in *Atti del III Congresso Nazionale di Archeologia Medievale*, eds. Rosa Fiorillo and Paolo Peduto (Florence, 2003), pp. 504–509.

22   Houben, p. 58.

23   For the remaining 18 samples see footnote no. 13.

glaze has been used to draw a twisted stem-like pattern.[24] The second sample (Fig. 9.4c) is a plate with the diameter of 25,6 cm, belonging to the Incised-Medallion Styles.[25] Colourless glaze covers both inner and outer surfaces. Two decorative bands survive. The one closer to the centre yields the rather common incised rope-looking pattern of stylised astragal.[26] The decorative pattern in the outer band, which finds a precise parallel with the sample no. 1185 from Corinth, could be regarded as a very cursive version of the motive 'H' in Corinth XI.[27] The third sample (Fig. 9.4d) is a bowl with the sgraffito of a fish, other common animals in the iconographic repertoire of SW, both Free and Developed Styles.[28] On its right, a further incised line could perhaps be the tail of a second fish, placed in opposite direction.[29]

Paternò. Paternò lies on the south-western slope of Mount Etna, in a suitable location for the control of important inland roads and agricultural breadbaskets. A considerable settlement during Greek and Roman times, its significance as a quasi-urban town increased dramatically from the Norman period onwards, when several monumental religious buildings and its castle were built, suggesting the existence of 12th-century civil and religious elites settled at this site.[30]

The only sample of SW found in Paternò (Fig. 9.4e) comes from a series of pits-test carried out next to the church of San Francesco, in the proximity of the castle and some other important ecclesiastical buildings.[31] The sherd is the bottom of a plate with ring-foot and light-yellow glaze. The fabric, pinkish in the core and greyish towards the edges of the section, is fine. From a decorative perspective, this sherd yields the finest example of artistic know-how and technical expertise. A wading water bird, in profile with its head pointing rightwards, holds a leafy branch in its beak. The plumage, rendered by scales pattern, is drawn up to the neck, where a horizontal collar interrupts it. The eye is realized by means of two concentric circle. Even though depictions of

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24   Scibona, "Messina XI–XII", p. 507, tav. 2, no. 10. Giancarlo Scibona, "Produzione e circolazione ceramica tra XI e XII secolo a Messina", in *Messina Palazzo Zanca, guida alla visita dell'Antiquarium e dello scavo*, eds. Giancarlo Scibona and Gabriella Tigano (Palermo, 2008), pp. 54–60.

25   Scibona, "Messina XI–XII", p. 507, tav. 4, no. 15. Scibona, "Produzione", p. 55; 60.

26   See the nos. 143, 149, 151, 152, 154, and 160 from the Alonnesos-Palagonnesos shipwreck, in Dina, "*The Byzantine shipwreck*", pp. 131–141.

27   Morgan, p. 33, fig. 2.; Plate XLIV, b.

28   Scibona, "Messina XI–XII", p. 507, tav. 3, no. 13. Scibona, "Produzione", p. 55; 60. For fish on SW See: Morgan, Plate XLII, i, j. Papanikola-Bakirtzi, "Byzantine Glazed Ceramics", p. 28, no. 5; p. 29, no. 6.

29   For a similar iconography see: Dina, "*The Byzantine shipwreck*", p. 130, no. 142.

30   Laura Maniscalco, *Museo Gaetano Savasta e le aree archeologiche del territorio di Paternò* (Palermo, 2012), pp. 61–62.

31   Maniscalco, "Il Museo Gaetano", p. 65.

wading water birds holding branches in their beaks were common in SW workshops, a precise iconographic comparison has not yet been found. However, the details of the beak and the eye recall one sample from the Victoria & Albert Museum,[32] while the execution of the leafy branch brings to mind the leafy branches depicted in one sample from the Alonnesos-Palagonnesos shipwreck.[33] According to L. Maniscalco, this sample could be from the Corinthian workshops.[34]

Piazza Armerina/Casale. To conclude with this examination of the evidence of SW found in Sicily, Piazza Armerina/Casale was a big Islamic and then Norman rural village (called *Iblatasah*) established on the site of the Roman *Villa del Casale* near Piazza Armerina. The main period of medieval occupation at this site spans from the first half of the 10th to the second half of the 12th centuries, after which the settlement was gradually abandoned.[35] At least three distinct samples of SW come from Piazza Armerina/Casale. Two samples have been recently found with other mid-12th-century pottery and coins in the filling of a disused well, during the Università Sapienza's excavation.[36] I identified the third in 2015, during a review of the ceramic materials unearthed in excavations carried out at this site during the 1950s.[37]

This latter sample (Fig. 9.4f) is a pate (27 cm diameter) with notched rim, belonging to the Medallion Style.[38] The section of the wall is very thin, fluctuating between 4 and 6 mm. The colourless glaze only covers the inside, while the white slip coats both the inner and outer surfaces. The composition of the glaze is medium-coarse, with small dark inclusions left visible. A brushstroke of brown glaze runs along the outer section of the rim. The colour of the fabric is redbrick. Its texture is moderately fine, with a medium-low percentage of

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32   Albert & Victoria Museum, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O122416/dish/ (last accessed, April 2018)

33   Dina, "*The Byzantine shipwreck*", p. 128, no. 140.

34   Maniscalco, "Il Museo Gaetano", p. 65.

35   Patrizio Pensabene, *Piazza Armerina Villa del Casale tra tardo antico e medioevo* (Rome, 2010).

36   Fig. 15 in Eleonora Gasparini, Guilio Scarponi, Giuseppe Paternicò, "Villa del Casale di Piazza Armerina: nuovi contesti ceramici dal I al XII secolo", in *Actas del I Congreso Internacional sobre Estudios Cerámicos,* eds. Lourdes Girón Anguiozar, Maria Lazarich González, and Maria Conceiçao Lopes (Cádiz, 2013), pp. 1275–1311.

37   Matteo Randazzo, Antonio Alfano, Paolo Barresi, "Pottery production and distribution at the Roman Villa del Casale between Early and Later Middle Ages. A preliminary revaluation of the Gentili's finds", in *Proceedings of the XI AIECM3*, eds. Yayina Hazırlayan and Feliz Yenişehirlioğlu (Ankara, 2018), pp. 219–230. For the 1950s excavations: Gino Vinicio Gentili, *Scavi della Villa romana del Casale, palazzo erculeo,* I–III (Recanati, 1999).

38   For similar notched rims see: Morgan, p. 121, fig. 9; 283, fig. 200. Also M. Alison *Frantz*, "Middle *Byzantine Pottery* in *Athens*", *Hesperia* VII (1938), pp. 429–467.
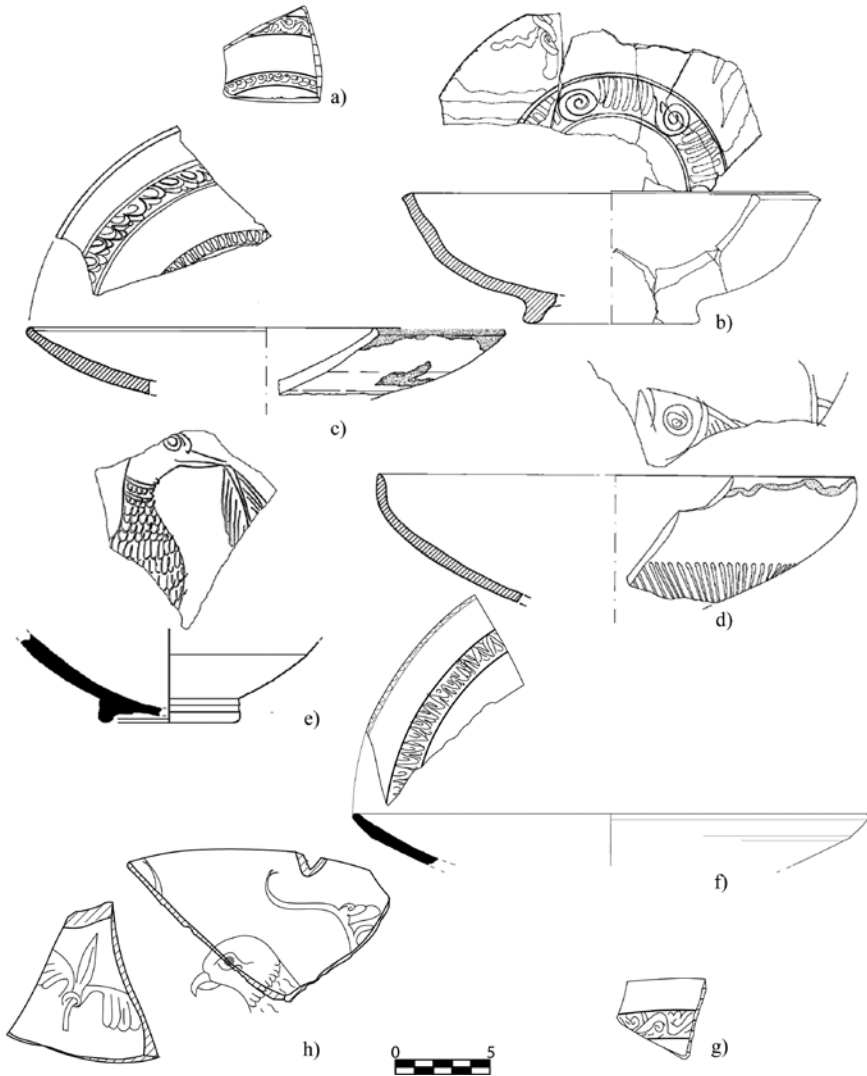
FIGURE 9.4 (a) Palermo (Drawing M. Randazzo on the basis of a photo courtesy of L. Arcifa),
(b–d) Messina (after G. Scibona, "Messina XI–XII", p. 507, tav. 2, no 10; tav. 4, no 15;
tav. 3, no 13; G. Scibona, "Produzione", pp. 55, 60), (e) Paternò (Michelangelo
Messina, "La Collina Storica di Paternò: produzioni locali e ceramiche importate
dal X al XVI secolo", in Dopo l'antico, ricerche di archeologia medievale, eds. Lucia
Arcifa and Laura Maniscalco (Palermo, 2016), Tab. IV no. 4), (f–h) Piazza
Armerina/Casale (M. Randazzo, g-h based on fig. 15 in E. Gasperini, G. Scarponi,
G. Paternicò, "Villa del Casale")

well sorted small white inclusions of irregular and circular shape and few elongated small voids. The cursive zigzag design which is sgraffito in the decorative band recalls the motive 'M' in Corinth XI.[39]

A second rim (Fig. 9.4g), belonging to the Medallion Style as well, is very fragmented and, unfortunately, I was not able to find it during my study at the archaeological archive of the site. The only surviving decoration of the band recalls Morgan's motive 'E' (see sample from Palermo).

The remaining two body-sherds, both belonging to a single sample, are the most interesting within this array from a decorative point of view. The surviving decorations yield stylised shoots and rinceau that find precise parallels with samples of Developed Style found across Greece and Italy.[40] Stylised shoots and rinceau are often used to frame central representations, most commonly birds; also in the sample from Piazza Armerina/Casale the head of a hawk is detectable.[41]

Summarising, the eight published samples of SW found in Sicily (four Medallion Style, one Painted-Sgraffito, three Free and Developed Style) come from four different sites. Two sites, Palermo and Messina, were and are big coastal cities. One site, Paternò, can be classified as a semi-urban settlement lying about 30 km away from the eastern coast of Sicily. The fourth site, Piazza Armerina/Casale, was an inland rural settlement located at almost 100 km from the coast. Regarding this regional distribution, what appears worth underlining is that SW is not only found in major coastal urban centres, as one would expect, but also in inland rural units.

3 SW in Sicily: A Case Study into Economic and Socio-cultural Connections between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and Komnenian Greece?

The practical and theoretical reasons behind the presence of SW in Sicily could be several and there could potentially be an endless number of theories

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39   Morgan, p. 33, fig. 2.
40   Greece: Morgan, Plate XLII, a, b, c. *Frantz*, "Middle *Byzantine Pottery*", p. 452, Fig. 13, A71; p. 453, fig. 14, A74. Papanikola-Bakirtzi, "Byzantine Glazed Ceramics", pp. 28–29, nos. 4 and 6. Italy see: Graziella Berti and Sauro Gelichi, "La ceramica bizantina nelle architetture dell'Italia medievale", in *La ceramica nel mondo bizantino tra XI e XV secolo e i suoi rapporti con l'Italia*, ed. Sauro Gelichi (Florence, 1993), pp. 125–199.
41   For a very close parallel, see sample from the Metropolitan Museum: https://www.met museum.org/art/collection/search/466117?rpp=20&pg=2&gallerynos=300&rndkey=2014 0514&ao=on&ft=*&pos=23

adduced to explain this phenomenon. However, three scenarios seem to reflect the data most clearly. Each scenario could actually mirror a concrete hypothesis. Thus, rather than thinking in terms of exclusion, a syncretistic approach will be taken. The risks linked to different 'monolithic' approaches would be to over- or underestimate the archaeological record actually available. In fact, as Ioanna Dimopoulos and Véronique François underline, one should be very careful before making assumptions about trading networks on the basis of pottery distribution: contacts were not necessarily direct, pottery often travelled with other goods, and a fairly high percentage of samples must be provided in order to justify organized trading activities.[42] Regarding Sicily, the first point to consider is the economic value of the samples of SW recorded on the island. Are we dealing with isolated finds that only bear witness to a marginal and random distribution and, therefore, cannot be representative of more complex economic connections (first scenario)? Or could 26 samples of a given production (relative to a certain period of time) be an indication of broader systems of trading activities (second and third scenarios)?

First scenario. The first scenario that permits a reasonable explanation about how and why SW reached Sicily is based on the unpredictable patterns of gift/exchange and movement of personal belongings (including booty of war) which, being the result of random and individual movements, are difficult to detect archaeologically.[43] There is no way to establish, for example, whether one sample of SW was brought to Sicily as the possession of a private individual (traveller, pilgrim, sailor etc) who was bringing it back from a journey abroad, or received it as a gift, or as the result of an exchange of goods, or whether it reached inland Sicily as part of a broader batch of items (booty?), perhaps in the wake of Roger II's return from the sack of Corinth, Thebes, and other Greek cities in the mid-12th century.[44]

While in these cases of gift/exchange and movement of personal belongings, economic processes that go beyond the simple purchase of the good at the source are difficult to follow, socioeconomic implications are undoubtedly

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42   Dimopoulos, "Trade", p. 185. François, "A distribution Atlas", p. 145. However, according to Joanita Vroom in the 12th-century "Byzantine ceramics were distributed by ship not for random trade, but for specific tastes and for specific markets along specific routes". Vroom, "Byzantine Sea Trade", p. 157. I wish to thank Dr. Edna Stern for her personal comments on this matter.

43   On the meaning of gift-exchange in early Medieval European economy: John Moreland, "Concepts of the early Medieval Economy", in *The Long Eighth Century*, eds. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden, 2000), pp. 1–34. For the non-economic definition of gift/exchange in the Middle Ages see Wickham, "The Mediterranean around 800", p. 162 (see above, n. 6).

44   For this hypothesis see Scibona, "Produzione e circolazione", p. 55.

of primary significance. In fact, should SW be, on its own or alongside with other objects, an item worthy of being privately transported, as well as the means by which exchange of gifts occurred (or also part of a booty), it would have had a recognized intrinsic value for both the carrier, the giver, and the receiver.[45] Such non-strictly economic connections, alone, do not rule out the parallel existence of broader processes of trading activities, and it seems unreasonable to believe that all the samples of SW found in Sicily reached the island randomly.

As we shall see, the second and third scenarios do imply economic activities. However, the low percentage of Sicilian finds of SW does not allow us to consider its markets as primary centres of demand justifying direct economic connections with the centres of production in Greece. Different, complementary economic patterns and trade-networks must thus be sought in order to explain the mechanism of this circulation and distribution of SW in Sicily. The second scenario will try to do so by focusing on the economic connections linking Greece and the Tyrrhenian Sea via Sicily; the third scenario shifts the focus from the Tyrrhenian to the Adriatic Sea, on the connections bounding Norman Apulia to both Sicily and Byzantine Greece.

Second scenario. The second scenario focuses on the Tyrrhenian Sea and suggests that the evidence of SW in this geographic area might mark the existence of what Michael McCormick has defined as "the ancient trunk-route linking the Tyrrhenian coasts with the Near East via Sicily".[46] According to the broader evidence of BGW along the Tyrrhenian coast, in fact, it might be possible to assume that some samples of SW reached Sicily, or better Messina, by following the same sea-routes linking the Tyrrhenian Maritime Republics

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45   As the Alonessos shipwreck demonstrates, in sea transportation, neither the fragility nor the weight of these items presented a problem, since tablewares were carefully stacked, possibly wrapped in cloths or similar materials, packed in baskets and arranged in the cargo holds: see Vroom, "Byzantine Sea Trade", p. 166. We do not know how these and other ceramics were transported on land, and multiple methods were probably employed (by means of wagons, donkeys and mules, rucksacks, and so on). Individually, single samples of SW are lightweight, approximately a few hundred grams. Comparisons with known patterns of distribution of equally fragile and lightweight tableware, such as African Red Slip Wares dating to the Roman period, demonstrate that inland bulk circulation of these items was a very widespread and common practice rather than an exception: Michael Bonifay, "Africa: Patterns of Consumption in Coastal Regions Versus Inland Regions. The Ceramic Evidence (300–700 A.D.)", in *Local Economies? Production and Exchange of Inland Regions in Late Antiquity*, ed. Luck Lavan (Leiden, 2013), pp. 349–380. Usually, tablewares were traded with other ceramics such as amphorae and cooking pots, as well as with perishable goods (textiles, spices, and so on) which have not survived in the archaeological record.

46   Michael McCormick, "Byzantium and the west, 700–900", in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, ed.* Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 349–380.

(Genoa, Pisa, and Amalfi) to the Byzantine Empire. The evidence of Sicilian glazed ware plentifully found in all these cities shows the existence of an established connectivity between Sicily and the Tyrrhenian coast.[47]

Even though this hypothesis of mediation between the Aegean centres of production and Sicily via the Tyrrhenian Maritime Republics appears plausible, when the Tyrrhenian distribution of SW is closely considered it is not so straightforward, calling for further adjustments. In fact, among the Tyrrhenian cities, SW only appears to be a merchandise whose distribution is limited to Liguria (mostly Genoa and Savona) and Campanian cities (Salerno, Naples, Amalfi, etc).[48] Along the coast between Genoa and Amalfi, Pisa lacks evidence of SW while imports from other eastern Mediterranean workshops are common, and only one sample of SW, Developed Style, has been found in Rome.[49] Accordingly, it seems natural to rule Pisan mediation out of this scenario. This Tyrrhenian pattern of SW distribution goes well along with historical sources and already known economic connections: Genoa and Amalfi are known for their closer socioeconomic ties with Greece, Constantinople, and Sicily (Genoese merchants even owned neighbourhoods in Messina and Palermo).[50] Pisa, by contrast, had a closer trade-partnership with Eastern Mediterranean regions of the Levant, being thus excluded from those sources of SW that Genoese and Amalfitan merchants shared in Peloponnesian and Euboean Greece.[51]

Third scenario. The third and last scenario shifts the focus from the Tyrrhenian to the Adriatic Sea, and bases its assumptions on the supposed redistribution of SW from Apulia to Sicily. Overall, in the Italian Peninsula the quantity of BGW and SW is higher in the Adriatic than in the Tyrrhenian, though in the former it is mainly limited to two main areas: Venice and its lagoon to the North, and Norman Apulia in the South. Venice and its lagoon, in particular, stand out as the most significant Italian centres of demand for BGW (including SW). Norman Apulia, due to both local demand and its intermediate position with respect to Venice, operated as a cultural and economic stopping point along the Venice-Aegean axis.[52] The link between the Veneto, Apulia, and core areas of the Byzantine Empire, aside from the historical record, is confirmed by

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47   For and overview: Berti, Gelichi, "La ceramica bizantina".

48   D'Amico, "Byzantine Finewares", pp. 476–478. And Marisa Milella, "Ceramica e vie di comunicazione nell'Italia bizantina", *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Moyen-Age* 101, no. 2 (1989), 533–557.

49   Berti, Gelichi, "La ceramica bizantina", p. 192.

50   David Abulafia, *The two Italies. Economic Relations Between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Northern Communes* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 217–254.

51   Abulafia, "The two Italies", pp. 59–214.

52   Milella, "Ceramica e vie", p. 554. Lorenzo Lazzarini and Ernesto Canal, "Altra ceramica graffita bizantina dalla laguna Veneta", in *La ceramica nel mondo bizantino tra XI e XV secolo e i suoi rapporti con l'Italia*, ed. Sauro Gelichi (Florence, 1993), pp. 79–92.

the high percentage of other ceramic finds, such as Constantinopolitan GWW II (10–11th centuries) and other 12th-century Greek wares (such as the Peloponnesian "Measles Ware") that, vice versa, are only marginally attested in the Tyrrhenian.[53]

Focusing on Southern Apulia, a Norman region itself, it is worth noting the economic and cultural behaviour of this area, as well as its strong economic connections to both Byzantine Greece and Norman Sicily. On the one hand, the markets of centres like Lecce, Brindisi and Otranto were filled with imports from Greece (such as Measles Ware and SW) and Constantinople (GWW and Polychrome Ware).[54] At the same time, as Helen Patterson and Paul Arthur underline, archaeological evidence demonstrates that, in the 12th century, the same cities were also importing large quantities of glazed wares from Sicilian workshops, for which they posit the existence of a well-organized Sicilian-Apulian trading axis (in the late 11th–12th centuries, Sicilian production in Otranto represented up to 40% of imports, whereas BGW constituted up to 50%).[55] Therefore, considering Apulian connections to both Aegean and Sicilian markets, it is possible that some samples of SW found in Sicily arrived along this axis linking Greece to Apulia and Apulia to Sicily, through exchange or other economic or non-economic activities.

The finds of SW from both Reggio Calabria and Messina support the last two scenarios, pinpointing further stops along each of the two axes. Furthermore, the presence of a considerable range of SW in Messina (particularly numerous in comparison to finds from the rest of Sicily) stresses the crucial strategic role of this city as a trading hub between East and West. Due to its geographical position and its maintenance of a well-organized port, Messina was one of the principal ports of call along the trading routes which linked the Aegean to the Tyrrhenian (the second scenario), and which linked Sicily to Apulia (the third scenario).

Whatever the case may be, whether random, organized, direct, or indirect, the distribution and circulation of SW in Sicily testify to interregional

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53   D'Amico, "Byzantine Finewares". Cf. François, "A distribution Atlas".

54   Helen Patterson, "Contatti commerciali e culturali ad Otranto dal IX al XV secolo: l'evidenza della ceramica", in *La ceramica nel mondo bizantino tra XI e XV secolo e i suoi rapporti con l'Italia*, ed. Sauro Gelichi (Florence, 1993), pp. 101–124. Paul Arthur, "Byzantine and Turkish glazed ceramics in southern Apulia, Italy", in *Çanak: late antique and medieval pottery and tiles in Mediterranean archaeological contexts*, ed. Beate Böhlendorf-Arslan (Istanbul, 2007), pp. 239–254.

55   For the percentage: Patterson, "Contatti commerciali", p. 105. On the Apulia-Sicilian trading axis: Paul Arthur, "Islam and the Terra d'Otranto: some archaeological evidence", *European Association of Archaeologists – Third Annual Meeting* (Ravenna, 1997), pp. 166–172, especially pp. 167–168.

connections that go well beyond political boundaries and cultural identities. The mechanisms and dimensions of these connections that linked Norman Sicily to Komnenian Greece, however, are still working hypotheses. Whether Sicily played only a marginal role in this connection, functioning as a mere mid-way stopping point, or whether it was a secondary market of demand is an issue to be further investigated. Still, considering the evidence of SW from Campania, Calabria, Apulia, and Sicily altogether (as we should, since all these regions belonged to only one political authority), allows us to highlight a common consumption area: the Norman Kingdom of Sicily which, despite its formal frictions with the Komnenian Empire, imported Byzantine tablewares from Greece as a matter of course.

Due to the fact that in the 10th–12th centuries the regional production of Sicilian glazed ware, differently from the rest of the Italian peninsula, was able to both fulfil local demand and support systematic export, it seems clear that we must seek other, non-utilitarian reasons in order to explain such minimal yet 'unnecessary' imports of pottery from Greece. The next section attempts to shed more light on this point.

4   The Consumers of SW in Sicily: Further Thoughts on Their Reasons for Acquiring Byzantine Tableware

Both the low amount of SW recorded in Sicily, and the traditional view that pottery has a relatively low-intrinsic value,[56] suggest that the samples of SW recorded in Sicily found their way to the island as an indirect result of the wider (random?) movement of goods travelling between Eastern and Western Mediterranean.[57] However, by combining Dimitra Papanikola-Bakirtzi's suggestion (that 12th-century SW is a ceramic production somehow exceptional in its kind),[58] then it would be possible to adduce that, asides randomness, the presence of SW in Sicily could reflect a local (though marginal) conscious demand.

56   Véronique François and Jean-Michel Spieser, "Pottery and Glass in Byzantium", in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki Laiou (Washington D.C., 2002), pp. 593–609.

57   A similar hypothesis of 'indirect trade' has been proposed with regard to the Italian evidence of a different yet contemporaneous category of Medieval fine tableware produced in Cina known as 'Céladon'. See Stefano Roascio, "Un Céladon in Valfontanabuona (GE): appunti per la presenza di ceramiche cinesi nel medioevo ligure", *Atti del XLVII Convegno internazionale della ceramica* (Albenga, 2014), pp. 7–21.

58   Papanikola-Bakirtzi, "Byzantine Glazed Ceramics on the Market", p. 215. Cf. Dimopoulos, "Trade", p. 181,

Regarding this supposed local demand, Sauro Gelichi's explanation to the presence of Byzantine, Islamic, and Sicilian glazed wares in Northern Italy as due to local elites "pursuing exotic items" cannot be applied to Sicily (an 'exotic' region itself).[59] In Sicily the demand for Byzantine tableware could reflect different motives in accordance with the various ethnic substrata of Sicilian consumers.

In particular, while (using Papanikola-Bakirtzi's words) the upper sections of the Arab and Norman populations might have demanded SW as "semiluxury goods and objects of social prestige",[60] a Sicilian (or Western) Greek, whose Byzantine ancestors inhabited this region for half a millennium, could have demanded Greek tablewares as material statements that reinforced his cultural identity.[61] In fact, although 11th–12th century Sicily is better known to traditional scholarship for its combination of Islamic-Norman culture, the Greek-Byzantine influence should not be underestimated, especially at the court of Palermo and in specific areas of the island, above all in Messina and its mountainous surroundings, as demonstrated by a plethora of late 11th–12th centuries churches and monasteries linked to the Greek Basilian cult scattered across this area (the same area in which Byzantine military resistance lasted until the mid-11th century).[62]

Palermo and Messina, therefore, the two major cities in which we have the evidence for both important urban elites and Greek communities, are the best empirical candidates to assume that the consumers of SW were part of local upwardly mobile sections of the population. However, due to the marked cosmopolitanism composition of both cities, whether these local consumers were Greeks, Normans or Muslims is difficult to establish. Likewise, the identity

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59   Gelichi, "La ceramica bizantina in Italia", p. 9. Before the Norman conquest, Sicily had been part of the dar al-Islam for about 250 years and a Byzantine foothold as late as the 1040s.

60   As said above, Sicilian consumers had no utilitarian need for importing ceramics from abroad because local production of tableware was able to fulfil the local demand for tableware. Papanikola-Bakirtzi, "Byzantine Glazed Ceramics on the Market", p. 215.

61   Stella Patittucci Uggeri employs a similar ethno-anthropologic approach based on the "*esigenze di una classe elitaria occidentale*" in order to explain the diffusion in Levantine regions of a 'classy and expensive' category of 13th century tableware produced in Italy (*maiolica archaica*): Stella Patitucci Uggeri, "La ceramica di età mediobizantina, veneta e turca", in *Gortina Agorà. Scavi 1996–1997*, eds. A. Di Vita and M.A. Rizzo (Padova 2011), pp. 259–318. In particular p. 277.

62   For general studies regarding the Byzantine influence in Norman Sicily see papers in Renata Lavagnini, Cristina Rognoni, *Byzantino-Sicula VI: La Sicilia e Bisanzio nei secoli XI e XII* (Palermo, 2014). Vera von Falkenhausen, "The Graeco-Byzantine Heritage in the Norman Kingdom of Sicily", in *Norman tradition and transcultural heritage: exchange of cultures in the 'Norman' peripheries of medieval Europe*, eds. Stefan Burkhardt and Thomas Förster (Farnham, 2013), pp. 57–78. For a synthesis on the Greek churches and monasteries scattered across Sicily see: Vera von Falkenhausen, "I monasteri greci dell'Italia meridionale e della Sicilia dopo l'avvento dei Normanni: continuità e mutamenti", in *Il passaggio dal dominio bizantino allo Stato normanno nell'Italia meridionale* (Taranto, 1977), pp. 197–229.

of the owner of the SW from Paternò is difficult to say. Despite Vera von Falkenhausen demonstrating through archival evidence the existence of Greek elites settled in Paternò during the 12th century,[63] both the methodological limits imposed by the non-extensive excavations of the site, and the discovery of only one sample of SW, do not allow for further considerations to be made.[64]

Moving from the coast to the inland, the site of Piazza Armerina/Casale, a rural village located almost 100 km away from the eastern coast of the island, is perhaps the most revealing with regards to the analysis of the possible ways and reasons for which three samples of SW travelled as far inland, either by economic or non-economic activities.

This settlement is indeed the one site among the four in Sicily, where SW has been recovered, in which archaeological research has been most extensively and systematically carried out, allowing this research to have a good framework of the broader archaeological record of 12th-century material culture at this site.

With the exception of these three samples of SW and ten low value Byzantine copper coins dating to the 11th–12th centuries,[65] architectural remains, epigraphic evidence, and the record of material culture unearthed in the excavations do not bear witness to any Greek element. Of course, interpreting social identities on the basis of material evidence is not always easy or straightforward. The *datum ex silentio*, however, seems to exclude the possibility of Greek communities inhabiting the site at Piazza Armerina/Casale during the 12th century. Vice versa, the archaeological record suggests that the local consumers were Norman or Muslim rural elites, who got hold of these tableware in spite of the plentiful amount of good quality glazed tablewares locally produced (a contemporary workshop producing glazed ware has been recently discovered in this site).

On the one hand, therefore, by following Papanikola-Bakirtzi's suggestion, it could actually be that local Norman and Muslim rural elites settled at this site deemed SW as "semiluxury items or objects of social prestige", consciously acquiring them.[66] On the other hand, however, these three samples of SW might have simply been part of the broader trade of perishable semi-luxury goods (such as textiles, spices, perfumes, etc, which left no traces) carried out on a small-scale from the Eastern coast of the island to this, and perhaps other, inland centres of demand and consumption.[67] The few Middle-Byzantine

63   Vera von Falkenhausen, "Tra Catania e Paternò: testimonianze greche dell'età normanno-sveva", *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici,* Ser. NS, vol. 37 (2000), 159–181.

64   Maniscalco, "Il Museo Gaetano", pp. 51–52.

65   See Gentili, "Scavi", II p. 120 no. 69; p. 124 nos. 90-91-92-93-94-95-98-99-100.

66   Papanikola-Bakirtzi, "Byzantine Glazed Ceramics on the Market", p. 215.

67   Written sources inform us that Norman Sicily imported luxury items such as spices, dyestuffs, and precious clothes form the Eastern Mediterranean. Houben, p. 161.

copper coins, in itself just a sign of communication with parts of the Byzantine world where such coins were of everyday monetary use, seem to hint towards this latter consideration of wider-scope trade, as they could well represent the loose change brought back by travellers and merchants.

A further and final consideration regards the social substratum of the Latin population. Alongside the proper Norman upper classes, the powerful sovereign military and religious Orders, such as the Hospital and Teutonic Knights, are further upper sections of the Latin population whose virtual demand for imported semi-luxury productions must be considered. As Henri Bresc underlines, in the general climate of the Crusades, such Orders, responsible for direct contacts between Sicily and the Eastern Mediterranean, played an important and practical role in establishing 'a regular flow of money and men' between the two halves of the Mediterranean Basin.[68] In the framework of these observations, it is noteworthy that the territories of Palermo, Piazza Armerina, Paternò, and Messina are all characterized by evidence indicating the significant presence of such Orders.[69]

5   Remarks

The small size of archaeological evidence of Byzantine SW known thus far from Norman Sicily limits very much the possibility to base wide-ranging conclusions on this evidence. Nonetheless, by placing the 26 published and unpublished finds of SW within their proper regional and broader Mediterranean contexts, Sicily appears as a mid-way stopping-point along the economic and socio-cultural axes that bridged the Western and Eastern halves of the Mediterranean basin. Although the quality and quantity of the data on which this study was able to rely force us to consider its conclusions as working-hypotheses, two economic axes seem to surface quite clearly: the Aegean-Tyrrhenian axis via Sicily, perhaps mediated by the merchants of the Tyrrhenian Maritime Republics, and the Sicilian-Apulia axis. A further scenario based on the unpredictable logic of gift/exchange and movement of personal belongings should be considered. In fact, besides merchants, it is perfectly possible that a number of these tablewares could have been "transported in the baggage of travellers, pilgrims, sailors, and the motley crowd" (as well as knights) who, altogether, made up the Mediterranean Medieval World.[70]

68   Henri Bresc, "I Cavalieri in Sicilia tra potere e società. The Knights in Sicily between power and society", in *La presenza dei cavalieri di San Giovanni in Sicilia* (Messina, 2002), pp. 13–33.

69   Bresc, "I Cavalieri", pp. 15–17.

70   Papanikola-Bakirtzi, "Byzantine Glazed Ceramics on the Market", p. 216.

Overall, considering the finds of SW from Campania, Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily, a common consumption region seems to emerge, that is the Norman Kingdom of Sicily. Since the local production of Sicilian glazed tableware was able to satisfy local demand, it seems that, apart from other economic activities, SW was imported due to its intrinsic and extrinsic value, and not for utilitarian reasons. That we are in a Norman Kingdom does not necessarily mean that all the consumers were Normans, as the cosmopolitan composition of the Kingdom left much room to Islamic and Greek (Byzantine) components. The circulation of SW beyond boundaries, political frictions, and religious restrictions offers a complex case-study into multilateral and multicultural interregional connections between Byzantium and the Norman Kingdom of Sicily. Beyond the micro-level, this research further informs current understanding of the fluid and dynamic nature of long-distance trade-related interactions across the medieval Mediterranean, in terms of the circulation and transmission of objects and knowledge apart from ceramics, such as raw materials and textiles.[71]

Further research is necessary to achieve a deeper understanding of the socioeconomic connections that linked Aegean workshops of SW to Norman Sicily. The systematic re-study of archaeological archives across the island is currently of the utmost necessity. Attention must be paid both to the association between SW and other Middle BGW,[72] as well as to contemporary numismatic evidence of Byzantine coins. Likewise, targeting research to specific areas of the island that are characterised by a particular ethnic substratum of the population -like the Greek-cult churches scattered across Val Demone- could enrich our understanding of the social-cultural meaning of SW, as the association (or lack thereof) between SW and these structures could serve as evidence to support or dismiss the idea of a local demand fostered by Greek communities.

Online Materials

Albert & Victoria Museum, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O122416/dish/ (last accessed, April 2018).

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71   See Anna Kelley's paper in this volume.

72   For a very recent starting-point see my talk given at the 12th AIECM3, Congress on Medieval and Modern Mediterranean Ceramics (Athens, 22nd–27th of October 2018): Matteo Randazzo, "Middle Byzantine Gazed Ware from the heart of the Latin Western Mediterranean (12th–13th cc.): an updated overview from Sicily". Available online at https://www.academia.edu/37725525/Middle_Byzantine_Glazed_Ware_in_the_heart_of_the_Latin_Western_Mediterranean_12_th_-13_th_cc_an_updated_overview_from_Sicily (last access November 2018).

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Between East Rome and Armenia: Paulician Ethnogenesis *c.*780–850

Carl Dixon

Paulicians are an apposite subject for investigating the transmission of ideas in the East Roman world. They are variously identified as the dualist, neo-Manichaean forerunners of western medieval heresy, "the extreme left-wing of the iconoclast movement," or adoptionist heretics who originated in Armenia.[1] Yet little has been written about them in the last half-century, despite historiographical and methodological advances in related fields.[2] This is remarkable because they comprise one of the most extraordinary social phenomena in the Eastern Mediterranean during the 9th century. Despite being practically unknown when the century began, Paulicians suffered intense persecution from the East Roman Empire in the 810s and again in the 840s. After the latter persecutions, they fled the empire and became one of its most dangerous enemies, raiding its eastern *themata*, often in conjunction with the Emirate of Melitene, until their eclipse in the 870s. This remarkable flourishing has not been explained by prior scholarship, which has instead focused on the thorny issue of Paulician belief. By contrast, I shall explain the Paulicians' rise to prominence through ethnogenesis, by locating them within the frontiers and "shatter zones" of eastern Anatolia and Armenia. In doing so, I shall understand Paulician ethnogenesis as a dynamic negotiation of identities between Paulicians and Romans throughout the period under study. Like many of the

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1 The quotation is from Frederick C. Conybeare, *The Key of Truth. A Manual of the Paulician Church in Armenia* (Oxford, 1898), p. cvi. For dualist accounts, see Yuri Stoyanov, *The Other God: Dualist Religions from Antiquity to the Cathar Heresy* (New Haven/London, 2000); Bernard Hamilton, "Introduction," in *Hugh Eteriano: Contra Patarenos*, eds. Bernard, Janet and Sarah Hamilton (Leiden, 2004), pp. 1–102. For Paulicians and iconoclasm, see Milan Loos, "Le mouvement paulicien à Byzance," *Byzantinoslavica* 24 (1963), pp. 267–276; Leslie W. Barnard, "The Paulicians and Iconoclasm," in *Iconoclasm: Papers Given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, March 1975*, eds. Anthony Bryer, Judith Herrin (Birmingham, 1977), pp. 75–82. For Adoptionism, see Conybeare, *Key*, pp. xxiii–cxcvi; Nina Garsoïan, *The Paulician Heresy* (The Hague/Paris, 1967), pp. 112–230.

2 The standard overviews are still Garsoïan, *Paulician Heresy* and Paul Lemerle, "L'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie mineure d'après les sources grecques," *Travaux et Mémoires* 5 (1973), pp. 1–144.

contributions in this volume, transmission proves a locus of destabilisation rather than reification.

This endeavour is possible thanks to the work of Claudia Ludwig. In a pioneering study, she analysed two Paulician sources (namely the *Didaskalie* and *Letters of Sergios*) which are now only preserved in a paraphrased form within Peter of Sicily's *History of the Paulicians*, which has traditionally been considered the most authoritative source on Paulicians within the empire.[3] She concluded that Paulicians were not dualists, as the *History* and most secondary scholarship assert, but instead held apostolic beliefs based on a reverence for the apostle Paul.[4] Through this analysis, she showed that the *Didaskalie* – a narrative source describing the origins of the Paulicians, their internal schisms and the persecutions inflicted upon them – was composed in order to legitimate the current Paulician *didaskalos* Sergios-Tychikos shortly after the persecutions undertaken by Michael I (811–3) and Leo V (813–20).[5] As a result, this source expresses Paulician understandings of themselves and their enemies in light of these persecutions. It is therefore a crucial source for investigating conflict-based models of ethnogenesis.

In a subsequent article, Ludwig examined the allegation of Paulician dualism in Roman traditions, arguing that Romans erroneously identified Paulicians as Manichaeans because this association justified their persecution under earlier legal codes.[6] Taken together, these articles necessitate a revision of earlier scholarship, which revolved around competing identifications of Paulicians as either adoptionists (that is, heretics who denied the divinity of Christ prior to his baptism) who arose in Armenia, or alternatively dualist heretics who would influence the Bogomils and Cathars, who were respectively based in Bulgaria and the Languedoc. Nonetheless, since Ludwig remained focused on Paulician religion, she did not place her conclusions within a wider historical context. I shall assume this mantle, basing my analysis on the *Didaskalie*, while contextualising Roman-Paulician interaction by employing Roman historiographical sources of the 9th and 10th centuries which describe these persecutions, notably Theophanes' *Chronographia* and *Theophanes Continuatus* I–IV. I shall then situate Paulicians within the eastern

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3 Claudia Ludwig, "Wer hat was in welcher Absicht wie beschrieben? Bemerkungen zur Historia des Petros Sikeliotes über die Paulikianer," *Varia 2 ΠΟΙΚΙΛΑ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΑ* 6 (1987), pp. 149–227.

4 Ludwig, "Bemerkungen," pp. 224–225.

5 Ludwig, "Bemerkungen," pp. 209–211.

6 Claudia Ludwig, "The Paulicians and Ninth-Century Byzantine Thought," in *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?,* ed. Leslie Brubaker (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 23–35.

borderlands of the empire, examining the conceptual frameworks and socio-economic contexts appropriate to this area.

1   Paulicians as a Ninth-Century Phenomenon

Adopting Ludwig's work as a starting point requires justification, since doing so marginalizes previous scholarship which traced the Paulician presence in the empire long before the 9th century. Earlier scholarship espoused competing reconstructions of Paulician history and belief, largely because Greek and Armenian sources give contradictory portrayals of them.[7] This is unsurprising because the varied and comparatively understudied Armenian sources cover the 6th to 8th centuries, while the closely related and better-known Greek sources span the 9th and 10th centuries. Scholars who preferred the testimony of the Greek sources, including Milan Loos and Paul Lemerle, believed that Paulicians were dualist and traced the Paulician presence in the empire to the late 7th century by employing the account of the *History of the Paulicians* – and therefore the *Didaskalie*.[8] By contrast, authors who founded their work on the Armenian sources, such as Frederick Conybeare and – to a lesser extent – Nina Garsoïan, identified Paulicians as adoptionists.[9] They did so by marginalizing contemporary Armenian sources (notably the *Contra Paulicianos* of Yovhannēs Ōjnec'i), instead founding their analysis on *The Key of Truth*, a source which dates to the 18th century and is, in my view, highly problematic.[10]

Neither of the historical interpretations described above can adequately explain the social processes by which Paulicians became a movement of regional significance. This is particularly true of studies based upon the Armenian sources, which predate our period and do not document Roman-Paulician interaction. Yet the circulation of people and ideas between Armenia and the empire is crucial to the study of Paulicians in Asia Minor. As we shall see, the name and geographical basis of the movement suggest this. In the case of scholarship founded upon the Greek sources, Ludwig's observation that the *Didaskalie* was composed in order to legitimate Sergios suggests that this

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7   For the Armenian sources, see Garsoïan, *Paulician Heresy*, pp. 80–111. For the Greek sources, see Paul Lemerle et. al. eds., *Travaux et Mémoires* 4 (1972), pp. 1–226.

8   Loos, "Le mouvement," pp. 267–276; Lemerle, "L'histoire," pp. 49–135.

9   Conybeare, *Key*, pp. xxiii–cxcvi. Garsoïan understood Paulicians within the empire as an aberrant dualist form of an adoptionist, Armenian heresy. Her study thus reconciles both interpretations described here. Garsoïan, *Paulician Heresy*, pp. 26; 210–230.

10   Conybeare, *Key*, pp. xxix–l; Garsoïan, *Paulician Heresy*, pp. 112–230. Yovhannēs Ōjnec'i, *Contra Paulicianos*, ed. Johannes B. Aucher (Venice, 1834), pp. 78–107.

source does not reliably describe Paulician history. It subordinates the past to the present and demonstrates a shallow and malleable historical memory.[11] I shall suggest that the extant version of the *Didaskalie* only traces Paulicians to the 7th century as a result of Peter of Sicily's revisions. The *History*'s primary aim is to argue that Paulicians merit capital punishment. In order to achieve this, Peter develops a loose chronological narrative associating Paulicians with their supposed forerunners Mani and Paul of Samosata. He integrates the *Didaskalie* into this framework by historicising it with references to Roman emperors, which is apparent from chronological inconsistencies within his account. The most notable of these, which we shall later examine, is his erroneous dating of the Paulician flight to Melitene. Beyond this, the source's unhistorical nature is clear from the implausible longevity of Paulician leaders. Modern reconstructions imply that there were seven Paulician leaders between *c*.655–835.[12] By contrast, during this period nineteen Roman emperors and twenty-four caliphs ruled.[13] By all indications, our extant text is historically unreliable.

Given these observations, Paulicians could have come to prominence in Anatolia around the turn of the 9th century. This theory is corroborated by Roman historiographical sources. Paulicians are unattested in any East Roman source predating the 9th century. The first Roman source to mention them is Theophanes' *Chronographia*, which was compiled in 814, three years after persecutions against Paulicians began.[14] Theophanes remarks that he favoured these persecutions and his distaste for Paulicians colours his narrative. He refers to them once during the 8th century, when he describes Constantine v's (741–75) relocation of Syrians and Armenians from Theodosiopolis and Melitene to Thrace. He blames Constantine's policy for subsequent Paulician expansion, but his account is contradicted by other Roman historians.[15] Nikephoros and George the Monk do not associate Constantine's relocation with heresy and although Symeon the *logothetes* and Michael the Syrian do, they

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11   For the relevance of this to ethnogenesis, see James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven/London, 2009), pp. 229–237.

12   Lemerle, "L'histoire," p. 84.

13   Jonathan Shepard ed., *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c.500–1492* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 906–907; 917.

14   Theophanes, *Chronicle*, ed. Carl de Boor, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1883–5), pp. lvii.

15   Theophanes, *Chronicle*, vol. 1, p. 429, l. 18–22. Barnard confuses this forced migration with another relocation that Constantine conducted in 746. See Theophanes, *Chronicle*, vol. 1, p. 422, l. 11–18; Leslie W. Barnard, *The Graeco-Roman and Oriental Background of the Iconoclastic Controversy* (Leiden, 1974), p. 109.

respectively identify the heretics as iconoclasts or Miaphysites.[16] Theophanes' identification is most convincingly explained by his distaste for Paulicians.

This is also apparent in Theophanes' polemical claim that the Emperor Nikephoros I (802–11) favoured Paulicians and Athinganoi, which presumably arises from Theophanes' almost inexplicable animosity toward this emperor.[17] Theophanes' imprecise understanding of Paulicians (and heresy generally) is evident elsewhere in the *Chronographia*. While describing a conspiracy to replace Michael I with the surviving sons of Constantine V, Theophanes blames this on the "Paulicians, Athinganoi, Iconoclasts and Tetradites."[18] As Ludwig has noted, Theophanes' tendency to refer to our heretics as "Manichaeans, now called Paulicians" implies that the Manichaean-Paulician identification had only recently become accepted, presumably because Paulicians were a new phenomenon.[19] Theophanes' testimony implies that Roman-Paulician relations were adversarial from the outset.

The amorphous way in which Theophanes understood Paulicians is apparent from his account of Michael I's persecutions:

> Moved by an excess of divine zeal, the most pious emperor [Michael I], at the instigation of the most holy patriarch Nikephoros and other pious persons, decreed the death penalty against the Manichees (that is the Paulicians of today) and the Athinganoi who live in Phrygia and Lykaonia, but was turned back from this course by certain perverse counsellors who used the pretext of repentance, although those who have fallen into that error are incapable of repenting. The counsellors argued in their ignorance that priests ought not to condemn the impious to death, being in this respect in complete contradiction to Holy Scripture. For if Peter, the chief apostle, put Ananias and Sapphira to death for nothing more than a lie; if the great Paul cries out saying "They which commit such things are worthy of death"; and this with reference to bodily sin only; does it not follow that those who deliver from the sword persons that are filled with every manner of spiritual and bodily impurity and are worshippers of

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16   Nikephoros, *Breviarum*, ed. Cyril Mango (Washington D.C., 1990), pp. 138–139; George the Monk, *Chronicon*, ed. Carl de Boor, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1904), p. 763, l. 14–18; Symeon the Logothete, *Chronicon*, 122:5, ed. Staffan Wahlgren (Berlin/New York, 2006), p. 190, l. 77–83; Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, ed. Matti Moosa (Teaneck, 2014), 11:24, p. 510; 11;25, pp. 512–513.

17   Theophanes, *Chronicle*, vol. 1, p. 488, l. 22–25.

18   Theophanes, *Chronicle*, vol. 1, p. 496, l. 10.

19   Ludwig, "The Paulicians," pp. 31–32.

demons stand in contradiction to the apostles? Even so, the pious emperor Michael executed not a few of those heretics.[20]

Although Michael curtailed these persecutions, the *History* and Theodore the Stoudite's letter to Leo the spice dealer (*Ep.94*) show that Michael's successor Leo V reimposed them.[21] As for this passage, Theophanes' account implies that these persecutions comprised indiscriminate massacres. A similar portrayal arises from the account of Theodora's later persecutions in *Theophanes Continuatus* IV. In the passage quoted above, Theophanes again understands heresy imprecisely. This is true of other sources. According to the *Vita Nicephori*, the persecutions encompassed Jews, Phrygians (that is, Athinganoi) and the followers of Mani (that is, Paulicians).[22] The *Vita* states that these persecutions occurred because the Patriarch Nikephoros wrote a tome against heretics, although it does not state the punishments that he advocated. Unfortunately, we cannot ascertain this matter because Nikephoros' treatise does not survive, but Paulicians were conventionally subjected to the death penalty because their belief was considered Manichaean.[23] This criterion applies neither to Athinganoi nor Jews, which implies either that both sources were imprecise in terms of the heretics that they identified, or that the legal basis for persecution was not followed rigorously.

Both possibilities are probably true. The context of this period implies that domestic religio-political concerns, rather than the threat of heresy, principally influenced these persecutions. It is well known that Leo V's restoration of iconoclasm was informed by the impression that the empire had lost divine favour.[24] The persecution of heretics represented another way to regain this. It is no coincidence that the two major persecutions of heretics (*c*.812–20 and *c*.843–4 respectively) coincided with the most contentious moments in the reversals of the iconomachy: Leo's resumption of iconoclasm and the immediate aftermath of the restoration of icon veneration, i.e. the Triumph of Orthodoxy (843).[25] Initiatives against heretics could deflect religious tensions away from

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20   Theophanes, *Chronicle*, vol. 1, p. 494, l. 33 – p. 495, l. 15. Translation: *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, eds. Cyril Mango, Roger Scott (Oxford, 1997), p. 678.

21   Peter of Sicily, *History of the Paulicians*, ed. Denise Papachryssanthou, *Travaux et Mémoires* 4 (1970), 175, pp. 64–65; Theodore the Stoudite, *Letters*, ed. Georgios Fatouros, 2 vols., vol. 2, Ep.94, pp. 214–215.

22   Ignatios the Deacon, *Vita Nicephori*, ed. Carl de Boor (Leipzig, 1880), p. 158, l. 28–29.

23   Ludwig, "The Paulicians," pp. 29–33.

24   Leslie Brubaker, John F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c.680–850: A History* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 366–370.

25   For the latter, see Brubaker, Haldon, *Byzantium*, pp. 447–452.

the issue of images by invoking a common enemy. Moreover, the persecutions of the 810s were informed by recent Bulgar victories over the empire.[26] This decade also represented an opportunity for the empire to reassert itself in Asia Minor. Islamic armies had formerly raided the peninsula, but these depredations eased after the civil war following the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd (786–809).[27] As a result, persecuting the Paulicians of eastern Asia Minor and the Athinganoi in the west of the peninsula reaffirmed the empire's control over the region. It is debatable how heretical these groups were, particularly since our sources give no indication of the means by which they were identified. They could merely have practiced modes of subsistence which were difficult to control or tax. Like many who lived in the peninsula, they were hostile to the imperial power and wished to evade its authority.[28] In summary, several factors informed these persecutions, which were not directed at clearly defined groups. Since Paulicians (and Athinganoi) had only recently become prominent, their consolidation could have occurred in the face of indiscriminate persecution. This hypothesis is corroborated by an analysis of the *Didaskalie*.

2   The *Didaskalie* and Paulician History

As already noted, the *Didaskalie* is now only extant in a paraphrased form within Peter of Sicily's *History of the Paulicians*. According to Lemerle's research, the *History* is an eyewitness account written *c.*870 by Peter of Sicily, an imperial ambassador, who had recently travelled to the Paulician stronghold of Tephrikē in order to conduct a prisoner exchange.[29] However, Lemerle's interpretation occasions serious chronological difficulties.[30] Accordingly, I have adopted Garsoïan's contrasting reconstruction, which interprets the *History* as a

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26   Paul J. Alexander, "Religious Persecution and Resistance in the Byzantine Empire of the Eighth and Ninth Centuries: Methods and Justifications," *Speculum* 52:2 (1977), p. 245.

27   Brubaker, Haldon, *Byzantium*, p. 289.

28   John F. Haldon, *The Empire That Would Not Die: The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival, 640–740* (Cambridge, MA, 2016), pp. 183–185.

29   Lemerle, "L'histoire," pp. 17–40.

30   He argues that the *History* was written and subsequently epitomized to form the *Treatise* conventionally attributed to Peter the Hegoumen. The Patriarch Photios (then in exile) subsequently metaphrased both works to form his *Contra Manichaeos*. All this occurred during the improbably brief period between 870 and 872. His interpretation necessitated a revision of the *terminus post quem* of both recensions of George the Monk's *Chronicon* to 872, since both incorporate the *Treatise* in its entirety. However, Afinogenov has problematized Lemerle's argument (even if he does not believe he has done so) by convincingly dating the first recension of the *Chronicon* to c.846/7. See Dmitry Afinogenov,

mid-10th-century forgery.[31] Since Ludwig adopted Lemerle's dating of this source, she considered Peter a generally reliable witness, concluding that his revisions to the *Didaskalie* consisted of occasional polemical asides and the suppression of any material that might have undermined the heterodox portrayal of Paulicians.[32] This is true, to a point, because Peter retains the structure of the original narrative, despite his revisions. However, in some instances, his emendations are more notable. The historicisation of the text noted above is one example. His account of the career of Sergios-Tychikos, the last Paulician *didaskalos*, is also suspect, as we shall see.

It was this Sergios-Tychikos (*c*.800/1–834/5), the notional head of the Paulician religious community when the East Roman Empire first persecuted Paulicians, who commissioned the *Didaskalie* and composed the *Letters of Sergios*.[33] Ludwig argued that the *Letters* were integrated within the *Didaskalie*, but the analysis adopted here suggests that they were not.[34] Nonetheless, since the *Letters* are difficult to contextualize and Peter has used them selectively, the *Didaskalie* will be our primary focus. This source is indispensable for our purposes because, although it is impossible to date precisely, the anxieties that it expresses show that it was written soon after the persecutions enacted by Michael I (811–3) and Leo V (813–20), which began *c*.811/2 and continued in Leo's reign after a short intermission.[35] The *Didaskalie* was composed in Greek for a Paulician audience and contains few allusions to Armenian or Islamic actors. Its thought-world is local and largely confined to the East Roman Empire. The source defies conventional genre boundaries, although some of its constituent episodes are based upon events described in the *Acts of the Apostles*.[36] Its eccentricities perhaps stem from its indebtedness to oral culture. This is evident in an idiosyncrasy that Ludwig did not heed sufficiently: although the *Didaskalie* was written to legitimate Sergios, it is implicitly critical of him, particularly because he disavowed reprisals against the Paulicians' Roman persecutors.[37] This implies that the *Didaskalie* is informed by opinions which circulated

         "Le manuscrit grec *Coislin*. 305: la version primitive de la *Chronique* de Georges le Moine," *Revue de études byzantines* 62:1 (2004), p. 246.

31   Garsoïan, *Paulician Heresy*, pp. 27–79. I intend to corroborate Garsoïan's conclusions in future publications.

32   Ludwig, "Bemerkungen," pp. 156–158.

33   Ludwig, "Bemerkungen," pp. 151–153.

34   Ludwig, "Bemerkungen," p. 214.

35   Venance Grumel, *Les regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, 4 vols., vol. 2 (Paris, 1936), p. 27.

36   The death of Constantine-Silvanos is moulded on the stoning of the protomartyr Stephen. See Peter of Sicily, *History*, 104–105, pp. 43–45; Acts 7:54–60.

37   Peter of Sicily, *History*, 157, pp. 58–59.

among Paulician adherents, rather than being a text dictated by a clerical elite. It also suggests that dissatisfaction with Sergios' leadership was acute.

None of the persecutions that the *Didaskalie* describes can be corroborated independently of it. It does not recount the persecutions of the 810s, perhaps because these events informed contemporary Paulician life so pervasively that it was superfluous to invoke them. Its narrative intimates that the most appropriate response of a *didaskalos* to persecution is to preserve his community by cunning, rather than by martyring himself. This unusual characterisation shows that the source was composed to legitimate the pacifistic Sergios. The following analysis is indebted to Ludwig, who showed that the symbolism of the *Didaskalie*'s narrative demonstrates that it was designed as a whole.[38] She did not however fully explicate the way in which the text symbolically links the four Paulician *didaskaloi* that the text describes, although she did identify aspects of its symbolism. This is perhaps because Ludwig believed that the *Didaskalie* related Sergios' career, but as we shall see, this was actually fabricated by Peter of Sicily.[39]

During the course of the *Didaskalie*, all of the Paulician *didaskaloi* adopt names from Paul's disciples and face persecution from Roman authorities. The source's rich symbolic meaning forms the first two *didaskaloi*, Constantine-Silvanos and Symeon-Titus, into a pair, with the former modelled on the protomartyr Stephen and the latter on the apostle Paul. Thus, Symeon, who is originally an imperial official, orders Constantine's adoptive son Justos to stone his master to death at Soros, near Koloneia.[40] After returning to Constantinople, Symeon converts to Paulician belief and then journeys to Koloneia, in the process succeeding Constantine as *didaskalos*. He subsequently quarrels with Justos, who brings their dispute to the attention of Roman authorities. They intervene and Symeon, together with his followers, is burnt at Soros.[41] Hence, Constantine and Symeon share the same adversary (Justos) and are martyred at the same location.

The next two *didaskaloi*, Gegnesios-Timothy and Joseph-Epaphroditos, also frequent the same locations, notably Mananalis and Episparis. In contrast to the earlier martyred *didaskaloi*, this pair use cunning to survive Roman inquiries, thereby saving their communities. In the former case, Gegnesios hoodwinks the Patriarch of Constantinople into thinking that he is orthodox, while in the latter, Joseph saves his followers from death by convincing an Islamic

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38   Ludwig, "Bemerkungen," pp. 190–191.

39   Ludwig, "Bemerkungen," pp. 205–207.

40   Peter of Sicily, *History*, 104–105, pp. 42–45.

41   Ibid., 110–111, pp. 44–47.

army (which has already slain the followers of his rival Zacharias) that they are only travelling toward Syria for pasturage.[42] This is the only instance of Islamic involvement in the text and, significantly, Joseph is later forced to flee from Episparis by another Roman inquiry.[43] Already the source's main themes are apparent. All four *didaskaloi* face intervention by Roman authorities who are thereby characterized as the Paulicians' primary antagonists. Although the *Didaskalie* describes the migration of Paulician communities – and this involves crossing frontiers (Mananalis lies in Armenia, while the other locations are in East Roman territory) – references to Armenian or Islamic actors are minimal. As noted previously, the source's cultural milieu is decidedly Roman.

To return to the *Didaskalie*'s symbolism, this is yet more complex, since it also associates the pairs noted above. Symeon-Titus and Gegnesios-Timothy are geographically linked, with the former travelling from Constantinople to Paulician territory in the east and the latter making the same journey in reverse shortly afterward.[44] More importantly, both Constantine-Silvanos and Joseph-Epaphroditos are struck with a stone.[45] When Constantine is stoned to death by Justos, the latter's actions symbolically bring dissension into the Paulician community. Contrariwise, Joseph-Epaphroditos survives the stone thrown by his rival Zacharias. As these events bookend the narrative, Joseph's career brings the *Didaskalie* to its logical culmination, in the process showing that the preservation of the Paulician community is the most important qualification of a *didaskalos*. While Constantine and Symeon die alongside their followers, Gegnesios and Joseph preserve their community by deceiving their enemies. Crucially, the complexity of this symbolic narrative demonstrates that the *Didaskalie* did not relate Sergios' career. The narrative reaches its logical end before the account of his leadership, which does not have symbolic parallels with the preceding material. Instead, it is polemical and largely comprises of quotations from Sergios, followed by Peter of Sicily's orthodox gloss.[46] This account was evidently composed by Peter with the aid of the *Letters of Sergios*, which he explicitly notes was a distinct source.[47]

But for our purposes, the most important consequence of the *Didaskalie*'s narrative is that the career of Joseph-Epaphroditos is integrated into this

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42   Ibid., 114–121, pp. 46–49; c. 125–126, pp. 48–51.
43   Ibid., 128, pp. 50–51.
44   Ibid., 107, pp. 44–45; c. 114, pp. 46–47.
45   Ibid., 104–105, pp. 42–45; c. 124, pp. 48–49.
46   Ibid., 132–181, pp. 50–65.
47   Ibid., 43, pp. 20–23.

symbolic framework, despite him being the predecessor of Sergios-Tychikos.[48] He may have been a historical individual, but his portrayal is as stylized as those of his predecessors.[49] Modern historians have attempted to trace Paulicians across centuries, but their historical consciousness did not extend back a generation. This is relevant from the perspective of ethnogenesis, since the malleability of the *Didaskalie*'s account is a characteristic of many narratives among peoples resistant to hegemonic powers.[50] The account has been moulded by the events which most shaped contemporary Paulician identity, that is, the persecutions of the 810s. It downplays the importance of martyrdom and consequently resistance, thereby demonstrating that the legitimation of Sergios was its predominant concern. Among Peter of Sicily's quotations from the *Letters of Sergios*, a significant passage stands out: "I am innocent of these evils, for many times I told them to desist from taking Romans prisoner and they did not listen to me."[51]

The conciliatory attitude that Sergios adopts towards Roman persecutors here is mystifying given the militarism for which Paulicians were subsequently famed. His complaint is particularly striking because the *Didaskalie* and Sergios' letters were intended for a Paulician audience who had experienced these persecutions. Most obviously, this quotation shows that Sergios' authority was scorned by many Paulicians. Their defiance implies a disdain for centralized authority that best explains their estrangement from the empire, as well as from Sergios. Heretical belief and praxis were less important in this regard than contemporary sources would have us believe. John Haldon has noted that anti-institutional sentiments were widespread throughout Asia Minor, particularly in the face of taxation or governmental interference. He hypothesized that Paulicians could be understood in such terms.[52] Anti-institutional sentiments were undoubtedly more intense following the empire's reengagement with the peninsula after Hārūn's death and the cessation of Islamic raiding, especially because imperial legitimacy was already weak after Bulgar victories in the Balkans and events such as Eirene's blinding of her son Constantine VI, the coronation of Charlemagne, and the long-running Moechian controversy.[53]

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48 Baanes was Joseph-Epaphroditos' chosen successor, but his lack of a Pauline name shows that he was not considered a *didaskalos*. Ibid., 130–131, pp. 50–51.

49 Ludwig, "Bemerkungen," p. 223.

50 See n. 11.

51 Peter of Sicily, *History*, 157, pp. 58–59.

52 Haldon, *Empire*, pp. 183–185.

53 For Eirene and Constantine, see Brubaker, Haldon, *Byzantium*, pp. 286–291. For Charlemagne's coronation, see p. 293. For the Moechian controversy, see pp. 290–291; 360–363.

As a result of their defiance toward Sergios, Paulicians cannot be conceptualized as a single confessional community and should rather be understood as a nebulous and fractious network during and prior to this persecution. This adequately explains their absence from Greek sources beforehand. But the aims of our Paulician sources reveal another perspective. Despite acknowledging criticisms of Sergios, these sources legitimated him and, since they eventually came into Roman hands, they must have circulated reasonably widely. This implies a propaganda campaign that was, significantly, linked with persecution. We have already remarked that Roman persecution in this era was indiscriminate and could therefore have encouraged a convergence of identities in previously independent groups. It is precisely this kind of convergence that Sergios and his followers are attempting to exploit here. The militaristic character of the movement in subsequent decades implies that his initiatives failed, but his martial rivals unquestionably achieved his aims more effectively.

3   The Labelling of "Paulician" Communities

Thus far, we have observed that Paulicians in 9th-century Asia Minor had only recently become a recognisable identification, largely as a result of Roman persecution. Persecution had a profound impact on their understanding of the world and led them to revise narratives of their history. It also led some Paulicians to criticize their notional leader Sergios. It is now time to place this in sharper focus by examining the origins of Paulicians in the empire and the socio-economic niches that they occupied. The *Didaskalie* shows that while Paulician identity evolved considerably in the face of persecution, Paulician communities predated this persecution. Since there are no indications that they engaged with central Roman institutions beforehand, it follows that early Paulician identities arose through interaction with provincial actors. This is admissible because Paulicians arose in the frontiers – or, as the editors put it, the margins and peripheries – between the East Roman Empire, Armenia and the satellites of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate. Koloneia, which lay close to the northernmost passes into Armenia, is invariably identified as an important locus of Paulician activity, as is the northern Armeniakon, which had a considerable Armenian population.[54] Frontiers have long been associated with ethnogenesis

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54   Peter of Sicily, *History*, 101, pp. 42–43; Peter Charanis, "The Linguistic Frontier in Asia Minor Towards the End of the Ninth Century," in *Actes du XIVe congrés international des études byzantines. Bucarest, 6–12 septembre, 1971*, eds. Mihail Berza, Eugen Stanescu, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Bucharest, 1975), p. 315.

in social anthropological and historical literature.[55] James Scott's concept of "shatter zones" is also closely linked with ethnogenesis and millennial religiosities. For Scott, shatter zones are not just areas whose geography and ecology preclude the processes of state formation; their flexible social character is a manifestation of deliberate strategies for resisting state control.[56] This situation certainly applies to Armenia, and to a lesser extent Anatolia, as Haldon's remarks on anti-institutional sentiment suggest.[57]

This geographical context, together with the Armenian origins of the name, provides a convincing explanation for why apostolic Paulician belief of the kind that Ludwig posited arose in eastern Anatolia, despite the fact that this religiosity is not associated with the term in Armenian sources. The unmistakably Armenian term "Paulician" translates to "the followers of the little Paul." It has been debated extensively, without any consensus about whether Paulicians used this term of themselves or with whom the eponymous Paul is to be identified.[58] For the first question, the term has no relevance to the Paulicians we are seeking here. The *Treatise*, a mid-9th-century Greek source, which was used in encounters with Paulicians, shows that our Paulicians did not use this term, stating that "They call themselves Christians and us Romans."[59] The second question is more complex and a definitive identification is irrelevant. The significant point is that this name shows the negotiation of identities between Paulicians and orthodox interlocutors, both Greek and Armenian, in a labelling process, rather than the accurate identification of a well-defined heresy.[60] Both Greek and Armenian sources connect the term with Paul of Samosata

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55 Patrick J. Geary, "Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct in the Early Middle Ages," *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 112 (1983), pp. 15–26; Walter Pohl, "Conceptions of Ethnicity in Early Medieval Studies," in *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*, eds. Lester K. Little, Barbara H. Rosenwein (Malden, MA/Oxford, 1998), pp. 15–24. For our period, see Ralph W. Mathisen, Hagith S. Sivan eds., *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, 1996); Florin Curta ed., *Borders, Barriers and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2009).

56 Scott, *Art*, pp. 7–8.

57 Haldon, *Empire*, pp. 183–185.

58 Milan Loos, "Deux contributions à l'histoire des Pauliciens. II: Origine du nom des Pauliciens," *Byzantinoslavica* 18 (1957), pp. 202–217; Karen B. Yuzbashian, "De l'origine du nom «Pauliciens»," *Revue des études arméniennes* 9 (1972), pp. 355–377; Hratch Bartikian, "Encore un fois sur l'origine du nom Pauliciens," *Revue des études arméniennes* 9 (1972), pp. 445–451.

59 For the source's name and date, see Garsoïan, *Paulician Heresy*, pp. 40; 53–54. *Treatise*, ed. Charles Astruc, *Travaux et Mémoires* 4, 9, p. 85.

60 See also Dion C. Smythe, "Byzantine Identity and Labelling Theory," in *Byzantium: Identity, Image, Influence*, eds. Karsten Fledelius, Peter Schreiner (Copenhagen, 1996), pp. 26–36.

(Bishop of Antioch 260–8), but the Paulician sources clearly show that the Paul who our Paulicians venerated is the apostle.[61]

This discrepancy can best be explained by positing that our Paulicians rejected, but appropriated this label, whose original significance may have eluded any of the involved parties. Essentially, it is the label "Paulician" which is being transmitted here, rather than a belief system. By this interpretation, these actors, whom Ludwig's analysis suggests espoused something close to conventional Christianities, were labelled as "Paulicians," probably by episcopal networks or local communities.[62] This term was intended pejoratively, but our Paulicians appropriated it by emphasising their veneration of St Paul, thereby accentuating their apostolic credentials. By doing so, they considered their religiosity purer than that of their interlocutors, as the above quote from the *Treatise* suggests, even if this process only reached its full development when engaging with the institutionalized orthodoxies (whether iconodule or iconoclast) of the Constantinopolitan church. The application of an Armenian label is significant, since it suggests that Armenian-speaking actors participated in demarcating the social reality of the region, even if Paulician sources imply a linguistically Greek milieu. This is unsurprising considering our geographical context and the frequent migrations of Armenians to Asia Minor during the 8th century.[63] It also implies that Armenian characteristics may have led others to label "Paulicians" as they did.

Yet the above account does not explain why provincial actors originally considered Paulicians to be distinct from themselves. One observation is important in this regard: East Roman actors did not habitually identify heresy on the basis of doctrine, but rather that of praxis. This tendency is apparent in major theological controversies. Even when the doctrinal importance of such controversies was compelling, they were often founded on matters of ritual practice, as in the use of the *Filioque* in the creed, or the use of *azymes*.[64] Provincials conceivably identified Paulicians on a similar basis. Their distinctiveness need not have arisen from religious concerns. In fact, there are indications that it might have derived from their modes of subsistence, specifically pastoralism. This is only once identified as a Paulician practice in the *Didaskalie*, although

61   *Treatise*, 1, p. 80; Garsoïan, *Paulician Heresy*, pp. 211–214.
62   Ludwig, "Bemerkungen," pp. 224–225.
63   Hans Ditten, *Ethnische Verschiebungen zwischen der Balkanhalbinsel und Kleinasien vom Ende 6. bis zweiten Hälfte des 9. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1993), pp. 72–82.
64   For the *Filioque*, see Tia M. Kolbaba, *Inventing Latin Heretics: Byzantines and the Filioque in the Ninth Century* (Kalamazoo, 2008). For *azymes*, see John H. Erickson, "Leavened and Unleavened: Some Theological Implications of the Schism of 1054," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 14 (1970), pp. 155–176.

the many migrations referred to by the text also imply this. The relevant passage occurs when Joseph-Epaphroditos flees to the empire from Mananalis:

> And Joseph the Senseless, having learnt this, turned the wagons as if he were going toward Syria, and when the Saracens came, he told them that he had set out for pasture and cheese making. Since they were persuaded by this defence, the Agarenes departed and allowed them to go unmolested.[65]

This reference locates Paulician pastoralists in the borderlands between the empire and Armenia. Alexander Asa Eger has recently identified pastoralism as a characteristic of this area, including cross-border migration by Christian peoples.[66] The *Didaskalie*'s testimony is therefore convincing. But pastoralism of this kind is difficult to attest elsewhere in Asia Minor, although this is admittedly conditioned by a lack of evidence for stock raising and the economy in general. John Haldon has argued that large scale ranching was a prevailing form of pastoralism throughout our era, largely as a result of his belief that elites retained high status.[67] By contrast, others scholars have argued that the peasantry increased in influence relative to elites, thereby implying that there were niches for pastoralists beyond the borderlands.[68] Eger corroborates this, arguing that palynological data from Nar Gölü in Kappadokia suggests limited stock raising in the area, rather than large-scale ranching.[69]

On balance, pastoralism could have played an important role in Paulician subsistence patterns, but it is impossible to substantiate this while our evidence for this period is scant. In any case, it cannot wholly account for the identification of Paulicians as heretics. The concept of shatter zones is once again of relevance. Scott notes that agents in these areas can adopt flexible cultivation patterns, pastoralism and brigandage as strategic choices under certain circumstances.[70] Hence, Paulician subsistence patterns were not a

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65 Peter of Sicily, *History*, 126, pp. 50–51.

66 Alexander Asa Eger, *The Islamic-Byzantine Frontier: Interaction and Exchange among Muslim and Christian Communities* (London, 2014), pp. 280–282.

67 For his views on ranching, see John F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 155–160. His more recent work does not discuss ranching, but does address elite continuity. See Haldon, *Empire*, pp. 162–167.

68 An appropriate recent study is Peter Sarris, "Economics, Trade and 'Feudalism,'" in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (Oxford, 2010), pp. 33–35.

69 Eger, *Islamic-Byzantine Frontier*, p. 260; Warren J. Eastwood et al., "Integrating Palaeoecological and Archaeo-Historical Records: Land Use and Landscape Change in Cappadocia (Central Turkey) since Late Antiquity," in *Archaeology of the Countryside in Medieval Anatolia*, eds. Tasha Vorderstrasse, Jacob Roodenberg (Leiden, 2009), pp. 45–69.

70 Scott, *Art*, pp. 182–207.

fundamental determinant of their identity. The same is true of their milita-
rism, which is attested soon after the persecutions of the 810s. This would be-
come more pronounced in later decades, as would their anti-institutional ten-
dencies. Their alienation from the established church perhaps also played a
role in the demarcation of their identity. Private churches were common in
Kappadokia, and indeed elsewhere, thereby implying that they were not dis-
similar from provincials in this regard.[71] Finally, we would be greatly remiss to
discount the appeal of an apostolic Christianity. Most probably, Paulician iden-
tifications were associated with all of the above factors at one time or another.
As in Matteo Randazzo's judicious analysis of *Sgraffito Ware* earlier in this vol-
ume, a syncretist rather than exclusionist approach to causal factors is most
appropriate here.

4　　Persecution and the Islamic Alliance

We have seen that the identification of Paulicians within the empire is best
explained by complex forms of identity negotiation between many actors. The
circulation of people and ideas in a localised context was of prime importance
in their formation. As yet, the central institutions of the East Roman Empire
had not played a significant role in shaping Paulician identities. This would
change dramatically with the advent of persecution in 811–2. Even then, how-
ever, Paulician and Roman identities diverged gradually. The *Didaskalie* shows
that Paulicians still considered themselves part of the empire, while Sergios
favoured reconciliation with Romans. Other Paulicians were evidently more
hostile. But it was only the renewal of persecutions against Paulicians after the
Triumph of Orthodoxy which led them to definitively break from the empire.
The context of this period implies that this estrangement would not have oc-
curred without a politico-military shift in favour of the empire's Islamic
adversaries.

　　As we have seen, the persecutions of the 810s were indiscriminate and en-
couraged the various networks termed "Paulician" to adopt a more cohesive
identity. This is evident from the *Didaskalie*'s narrative, even if the source
failed in its aims. To show that Paulician communities remained disunited at
this time, we must dispel one of the most misleading arguments advanced by
prior scholarship: the hypothesis that the Paulician flight to Melitene occurred
before the career of Karbeas. There are two extant narratives of the flight to

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71　　James E. Cooper, Michael J. Decker, *Life and Society in Byzantine Cappadocia* (Basingstoke,
　　　2012), pp. 154–158.

Melitene, one in *Theophanes Continuatus* IV, which dates this flight to *c.*843–4 under Karbeas, and another in the *History of the Paulicians*, which dates the flight to Sergios' leadership (800/1–834/5), shortly after the persecutions of the 810s.[72] Lemerle, who mistakenly believed that the *History* was a reliable source, posited two independent migrations to Melitene, but the first of these is evidently a duplicate. Both narratives identify the relevant Emir of Melitene as ʿAmr ibn Ubaydallāh ibn Marwān al-Aqṭaʿ al-Sulamī, who is otherwise first attested in 838.[73] ʿAmr was a partisan of the Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim (833–42) and his rise was intimately connected with this caliph. Before his downfall (*c.*835–8), al-ʿAbbās ibn Maʾmūn controlled the frontier provinces, thereby problematising ʿAmr's leadership beforehand. Bernd Vest believes that Melitene's regional importance was minimal in the 830s.[74] Its rise was surely connected to the Islamic abandonment of the strategic base of Tyana in 833.[75] Melitene was not regionally significant before Sergios' death and consequently there was no Islamic alliance at the time that Lemerle posited. In my view, Peter of Sicily based the *History*'s account of the flight on *Theophanes Continuatus* IV because he lacked sources for Sergios' career, thereby showing that the *History* is a mid-10th-century forgery.[76] There is another indication that the testimony of widespread Paulician resistance to the empire soon after the persecutions of the 810s is false: the scant evidence that they participated in the revolt of Thomas the Slav. Both Genesios and the Continuator mention Paulicians and a host of other foreign peoples within Thomas' army, but there is no reference to these groups in the most contemporary source of the event, Michael II's *Letter to Louis*.[77] As a result, the reputed Paulician presence in Thomas' army is probably the result of later interpolation.[78] On balance, this revised chronology

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72   *Theophanes Continuatus* I–IV, eds. Jeffrey M. Featherstone, Juan Signes-Codoñer (Boston/Berlin, 2015), 4:16, pp. 236–237; Peter of Sicily, *History*, 175–178, pp. 64–65.

73   Bernd A. Vest, *Geschichte der Stadt Melitene und der umliegenden Gebiete: vom Vorabend der arabischen bis zum Abschluß der türkischen Eroberung (um 600–1124)*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Hamburg, 2007), p. 663. ʿAmr's purported victory over Theophilos in 835, which is described by Michael the Syrian, is a mistaken duplicate of the 838 Battle of Anzes. See Juan Signes Codoñer, *The Emperor Theophilos and the East, 829–842* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 259–262.

74   Vest, *Melitene*, vol. 2, pp. 663–664.

75   Cooper, Decker, *Byzantine Cappadocia*, pp. 23–24.

76   I shall elaborate this argument in future work.

77   *Epistula ad Ludovicum Imperatorem*, in MGH, Leges III, Concilia II, Concilia Karolini Aevi 2 (Hannover/Leipzig, 1908), p. 476, l. 20–25; Genesios, *Basileion*, eds. Anni Lesmüller-Werner, Ioannes Thurn (Berlin/New York, 1978), 2:2, p. 24, l. 17–21; *Theophanes Continuatus* I–IV, 2:12, pp. 82–83, l. 19–22.

78   As argued by Paul Lemerle, "Thomas le Slave," *Travaux et Mémoires* 1 (1965), pp. 285–287; Helga Köpstein, "Zur Erhebung des Thomas," in *Studien zum 8. und 9. Jahrhundert in*

implies that the militaristic tendencies which Sergios bemoaned were isolated reprisals. Resistance in the 840s was more endemic.

Although the death penalty technically still applied between the two major persecutions of Paulicians, it was not enforced systematically. Heresy only became a pressing concern when, once again, religious tensions rose after the restoration of image veneration by the Empress Theodora, regent for her young son Michael III (842–67). During this persecution (c.843–4), Paulicians alone were targeted. Our sole account occurs in *Theophanes Continuatus* IV:

> The empress rejoiced in this, and as if desiring to set up a greater trophy, she made an attempt also on the Paulicians in the east, either to convert them to piety, as she wished, or else to do away with and wipe them out from mankind; and this brought many evils upon our land. For she sent certain men of rank with authority – those dispatched were called the son of Argyros, the son of Doux and Soudales – and they hung some Paulicians on the furca, others they gave over to the sword and yet others to the depths of the sea. The host thus destroyed numbered some hundred thousand, and their property was given over and paid into the imperial treasury. Now, amongst the servitors of the general of the Anatoliacs – this was Theodotos of the family of Melissenos – there was a certain man by the name of Karbeas who held the office of protomandator and who prided himself and exulted in the faith of these aforesaid Paulicians. When he heard that his own father had been hung on the furca, he considered this the most terrible of things and, taking thought for his own life, he fled as a refugee[79] together with another five thousand adherents of this heresy to Amer who then occupied Melitene, and from there they went to the ameramnounes[80] and were received with great honour. And having given and likewise received guarantees, they soon set out against the land of the Romans; and on account of their victories, when their numbers had increased, they endeavoured to found cities for themselves, one called Argaoun, <and also Amara>.[81]

In this passage, Roman persecution is once more characterized as an indiscriminate affair, although here the Continuator considers the repercussions to

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Byzanz, eds. Helga Köpstein, Friedhelm Winkelmann (Berlin, 1983), p. 73. For a contrasting perspective, see Signes Codoñer, *The Emperor Theophilos*, pp. 49–51.

79   *Φυγάς*. Deserter is another possible translation.
80   The Caliph al-Wāthiq (842–847).
81   *Theophanes Continuatus* I–IV, 4:16, pp. 236–237, l. 1–22.

be negative. Persecution, meanwhile, is considered the sole cause for Karbeas' actions. In fact, this is doubtful. Karbeas' flight is dated to *c*.843–4, but in 844 'Amr al-Aqṭa' conducted a raid through Asia Minor, eventually reaching Bithynia, where he defeated the *logothetes* Theoktistos at Mauropotamos. During this battle, many Romans defected to 'Amr due to the unpopularity of Theoktistos.[82] Karbeas surely deserted from the army during 'Amr's campaign, rather than fleeing to Melitene as a refugee. Several considerations make this likely. The recent death of the militarily capable Theophilos (829–42) changed the politico-military dynamic on the eastern frontier. Furthermore, the Anatolikon theme, where Karbeas was based, had suffered dislocation after al-Muʿtaṣim's sack of its capital Amorion in 838. Karbeas' motives were complex.[83] Although the Continuator presents the flight to Melitene as a purely Paulician affair, the context implies that many of those who defected actually came from the East Roman army. We could even go as far as doubting whether Karbeas was considered Paulician prior to his defection. The identification of these defectors as "Paulician" could arise from the uncomfortable circumstance that many of them were Roman.

These findings render it difficult to assess the extent of continuity between the "Paulicians" of Sergios' and Karbeas' respective eras. As in the case of Anna Kelley's exemplary reappraisal of cotton cultivation which closes this volume, we may be dealing with separate but sometimes overlapping phenomena rather than a single explanatory framework. Even if Karbeas' defectors were distinct from those of Sergios, they may have become influenced by earlier Paulician norms. We should recall that the Continuator states that significant Paulician migration only occurred after the establishment of new Paulician

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82   Symeon, *Chronicon*, 131:4, p. 233, l. 27–30. The battle is not recounted by other near-contemporary historians, such as Genesios or the Continuator.

83   The same is probably true of the Khurramiyya, who were Mazdakite, or perhaps dissident Islamic, heretics who fled Muslim territory and served under Theophilos. See Signes Codoñer, *The Emperor Theophilos*, pp. 139–180. A perceptive reviewer of this paper remarked that Patricia Crone's recent book on the Khurramiyya (and indeed other groups) might provide a useful counterpoint to the interpretation offered here, in that it recounts the militarisation of religious movements without requiring their sudden crystallisation, as I have proposed for the Paulicians. This is certainly an appropriate critique, but I think it equally true that the revolts that Crone describes could be profitably studied with greater emphasis on the contingency and distinctiveness of their local contexts, rather than through a pronounced emphasis on the substratum of religious ideas that Crone argues were common throughout the Iranian world. See also Patricia Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism* (Cambridge, 2012), especially pp. 31–76.

centres in the hinterland of Melitene.[84] Those Paulicians who disdained Sergios' authority were well-suited to the new socio-economic niches that were opened by the Islamic alliance. The Paulician settlements of Argaoun and Tephrikē are found in areas which Eger identifies as being suited to pastoralism. It is well-known that pastoralism and banditry are intimately connected, so these agents would also be suited to the raiding opportunities that the Islamic alliance brought. Finally, this context again reveals the malleable way in which communities in such areas understood themselves. When the *Didaskalie* was codified in the aftermath of Michael I's and Leo V's persecutions, Armenians and Muslims barely featured in the narrative and their portrayals were underdeveloped. An Islamic-Paulician alliance was unthinkable at this time, but changing circumstances on the eastern frontier made this possible only decades later.

5   Conclusion

In this article, I have understood "Paulician" identities in malleable terms. These identities were informed by their understandings of themselves, as well as the views of Romans, Armenians and Muslims. The term does not straightforwardly designate a pre-existing community, connote the transmission of a defined belief system, or mark the beginning of a trans-continental medieval dualism. I have instead explained Paulician activity through an ethnogenesis grounded in the marginal zones between empire, caliphate and Armenia during the late 8th and early 9th centuries because this most convincingly explains why Paulicians became a major regional power in this area. In doing so, I have argued that Paulicians arose in Asia Minor through labelling processes, postulating that local actors, including Armenian speakers, identified communities as "Paulicians." The reasons by which these Paulicians were distinct from other provincials cannot be determined conclusively, but perhaps involved factors such as Armenian identity, pastoralism and militarism. Paulicians did not become truly significant until their persecution by East Roman authorities in the 810s. The indiscriminate nature of these persecutions encouraged the communities who were targeted to unite, but even this did not lead Paulicians to become a movement of regional significance. Amenable politico-military contexts in Roman and Islamic territories were necessary for this to occur. These, together with the renewed persecution of Paulicians in the regency of Theodora, led Karbeas to align himself with ʿAmr al-Aqṭaʿ, the Emir of Melitene.

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84   *Theophanes Continuatus* I–IV, 4:16, p. 236–237, l. 21–22.

The above analysis raises several important conclusions. The persecution of heretics during this period was predominantly conditioned by attempts to deflect religious tensions from concerns about image veneration and the divine favour of the empire, rather than by the actual threat posed by heresy. Changing political circumstances also informed the situation, whether this was the civil war which occurred on Hārūn al-Rashīd's death, or 'Amr's raids through Asia Minor. The theory that Karbeas' followers originally came from the East Roman army implies that conflict on the eastern frontier was fought on more complex lines than has conventionally been understood, especially because I have suggested that Paulicians did not systematically raid the empire before the 840s. As for the study of Paulicians in the East Roman Empire, this study necessitates approaching them as a historical phenomenon from the late 8th century onward. The term Paulician is attested beforehand in Armenian sources, but scholars must be attentive to the possibility that heretical appellations are used for different ends by different sources. The imprecision of ethnonyms in Greek sources is readily apparent and heretical identifications are no different. Further research might consider the extent to which ideas of heresy and foreignness overlap in Roman understandings, since there is clearly a close relationship here.[85] Finally, the complexity of interactions posited above suggests that our Paulicians were a fractious network which splintered and realigned depending on circumstances. It is doubtful that Paulicians were ever a unified religio-political community during our period, except in the imaginations of the Romans who persecuted them.

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85   See also Dion Smythe, "Alexios I and the Heretics: the Account of Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*," in *Alexios I Komnenos: I Papers*, eds. Margaret Mullett, Dion Smythe (Belfast, 1996), pp. 234–236.

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By Land or by Sea: Tracing the Adoption of Cotton in the Economies of the Mediterranean

Anna Kelley

1   Cotton and Watson's "Agricultural Revolution"

In 1974, Andrew Watson proposed that the spread of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries resulted in an agricultural revolution that transformed the global medieval economy, a multifaceted process that continued through the twelfth century. He wrote that an influx of new summer crops, introduced by the Arabs from the tropical climate of the Indian subcontinent into areas that had previously been dominated by winter crops, dramatically altered the agricultural and economic situations of the lands in their control, eventually impacting European economies as well.[1] The adoption of these new crops had a direct impact on the trajectory of labour organisation, production, demography and culture, which, he reasoned, in turn allowed for integrated economic expansion between the Caliphate and its neighbours.[2] The premise of his argument was that these crops were largely unknown throughout the ancient world prior to this point; as summer crops were introduced along with new irrigation technologies, crop rotation became widespread. The ensuing growth in agricultural output therefore drove increases in surplus and urbanisation.[3] Of the crops Watson put forward as integral to this transformation, only one was a non-foodstuff: cotton.

Watson's theory of an agricultural revolution became highly influential in subsequent reconstructions of commercial networks the first millennium. This has been especially true in discussions of textiles. Textile historians have

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1   Watson identified seventeen crops which he said demonstrated the significance of this agricultural revolution: rice, sorghum, durum wheat, sugar cane, watermelons, aubergine, spinach, artichokes, taro (colocasia), sour oranges, lemons, limes, bananas, plantains, mangoes, coconut palms and cotton. Andrew Watson, "The Arab Agricultural Revolution and its Diffusion, 700–1100," *The Journal of Economic History*, 34:1 (1974), p. 9.

2   Watson, "Arab Agricultural Revolution," p. 8.

3   For a complete discussion of the principles behind the theory of "agricultural revolution" see: Andrew Watson, *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World: The Diffusion of Crops and Farming Techniques, 700–1100* (Cambridge, 1983).

typically placed India at the centre of an expansion of "eastern" textiles (such as cotton and silk) emphasising its importance in cultivation, production and spread as the centuries progressed.[4] Watson's argument—that India played an especially important role in global development through expanded trade networks that introduced new crops and practices—only reinforced the narrative of India's central role as a global textile source fulfilling a demand for luxury cotton and silks.[5] Despite new evidence from archaeological excavations in the succeeding decades, the position of cotton in this argument has received little critical investigation. This paper will broadly re-analyse the role of India in the transmission of cotton cultivation and use in the centuries directly preceding and following the spread of Islam and the patterns of circulation in the observed in the Mediterranean and Middle East. By examining the evidence of cotton use and cultivation, as well as the texts that discuss cotton as a commodity throughout the first millennium, it will become clear that cotton was, contrary to Watson's assertion, widely known before the eighth century, and that it was the force of economic coadunation rather than expanding trade connections with India that laid the groundwork for the cotton boom that would occur in the later medieval period. While it is not the intention of this paper to provide a wider refutation of Watson's theory of agricultural revolution, it will propose that a more nuanced model based on both diffusion and consolidation is needed when discussing the transmission of agricultural practices and circulation of crops in the first millennium. It will further suggest that the Indian Ocean's role in these processes has been overemphasised at the expense of other geographic networks.

2   A Note on Textile Origins and Spin-Direction

One common issue in the study of archaeological textiles is how to determine origin; a characteristic that has long been used is the spin-direction of the yarns. This refers to the direction in which the fibres were spun to create the thread, either to the left or the right, which creates an observable "lean" of the rotations in the finished yarn. In the secondary literature, yarns are thus described as being S-spun or Z-spun. The spin-direction of a yarn is a direct

4   For example, see the first chapter of Giorgio Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World* (Cambridge, 2013) or Maureen Mazzaoui, *The Italian Cotton Industry in the Later Middle Ages, 1100–1600* (New York, 1981).

5   A comprehensive re-contextualisation of the medieval silk industry can be found in Julia Galliker, *Middle Byzantine Silk in Context: Integrating Textual and Material Evidence* (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2014).

result of the manner in which it was spun, and has been seen as the result of culturally determined traditions and technologies that differed amongst geographic regions.[6] In Egypt, where linen had long been the predominant fibre type, most textiles have had S-spun yarns (left leaning) because wet linen fibres have a natural tendency to twist in that direction; in the northern and eastern regions of the Mediterranean, where both wool and flax were used, the yarns tended to be Z-spun (right leaning), also found in the textiles from India, Central Asia and the Middle East.[7] Hence, cottons that have Z-spun threads have been interpreted as being Indian in origin while those with S-spun threads were either native Egyptian or Nubian in origin (although the question of where the raw cotton came from is often not addressed).[8]

For late Roman sites on or near the Red Sea coast where cotton has been identified (Berenike, Myos Hormos and Abu Sha'ar), which were hubs for Indian Ocean trade, such distinctions are logical. However, Z-spun threads also appear in contexts far removed from these ports, such as in Kellis in Egypt's Western Desert and Qasr Ibrim in Lower Nubia; the geographic distance from the coasts and the typically non-elite contexts in which the finds were made have led some scholars to conclude that an Indian source for these objects is unlikely.[9] Similarly, textiles which contain yarns of both spin-directions (mixed), or textiles containing a fibre other than cotton which is Z-spun, often

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6   Elizabeth Barber, *Prehistoric Textiles: The Development of Cloth in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages with Special Reference to the Aegean* (Princeton, 1992), p. 65.

7   Barber, *Prehistoric Textiles*, pp. 65–66.

8   For example, see: John Paul Wild and Felicity Wild, "The Textiles," in *Berenike 1999/2000: Report on the Excavation at Berenike, including Excavations in Wadi Kalalat and Siket, and the Survey of the Mons Smaragdus Region*, eds. Steven Sidebotham and Willeke Wendrich (Los Angeles, 2007), pp. 211–220.

9   Gillian Bowen, "Textiles, Basketry and Leather Goods from Ismant el-Kharab," in *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Preliminary Reports on the 1994–1995 to 1998–1999 Field Season*, eds. Colin Hope and Gillian Bowen (Oxford, 2002), pp. 87, 89; John Peter Wild *et al.*, "Roman Cotton Revisited," in *Vestidos, textiles y tintes: estudios sobre la producción de bienes de consumo en la antigüedad*, eds. Carmen Alfaro Giner and Lilian Karali (Valencia, 2008), p. 146. The cotton imported from India was not necessarily inherently a luxury, as shown by the finds in the Red Sea Ports (see footnote 16), but the costs associated with transport to more remote regions would have increased their end price. As cotton was being produced locally in both the Western Desert and Lower Nubia, and the Z-spun cottons there were not found in elite contexts, it is more likely that they were not Indian Ocean imports. While there are examples of cotton as far north as Germany and Switzerland dating to the early sixth century, they were from clearly elite contexts. Johanna Banck-Burgess, "An Webstuhl und Webrahmen: Alamannisches Textilhandwerk," in *Die Alamannen*, eds. Herman Herzog and Arnold Koller (Stuttgart, 1997), p. 375; Heidi Amrein, Antoinette Rast-Eicher and Renata Windler, "Neue Untersuchungen zum Frauengrab des 7. Jahrhunderts in der reformierten Kirche von Bülach (Kanton Zürich)," *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte*, v. 56.2 (1999), pp. 95–96.

remain uncommented on.[10] In the case of mixed spin-directions, it has been speculated that these textiles may have been produced along trade routes,[11] and that the mixed spin-directions were used for intentional visual effect.[12] However, both of these reasons assume a knowledge and use of both spinning traditions within a single geography. Using spinning traditions as identifiers is also less relevant to discussions outside Egypt, which tended to all produce Z-spun yarn. Therefore, I find caution should be used when using spin-direction to determine the origin of cotton, and it should be considered within the larger context of cotton networks discussed below.

3   Cotton in the Ancient World

Watson's theory been undergoing some critical re-evaluation in light of new archaeological evidence. While there had been occasional references to problems within the framework of Watson's premise, it was not until 2009 that Michael Decker directly challenged the fundamental basis of Watson's argument.[13] Decker looked at four of the crops supposedly crucial to the agricultural revolution (durum wheat, rice, artichoke and cotton) and determined that all were known outside of India prior to the spread of Islam.[14] Defenders of Watson's theory have stressed that the central theme of Watson's argument

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10   At Kellis, Livingstone identified Z-spun cotton as a likely import from India but makes no mention of Z-spun wool found at the same site. Rosanne Livingstone, "Late Antique Household Textiles from Kellis in the Dakhleh Oasis," in *Clothing the house: Furnishing textiles of the 1st millennium AD from Egypt and neighbouring countries*, eds. Antoine De Moor and Cäcilia Fluck (Tielt, 2009), pp. 73–85.

11   Linda Bellinger, "Textiles," in *Excavations at Nessana, Volume 1* ed. Harris Dunscombe Colt (London: 1962), p. 10.

12   Orit Shamir, "Egyptian and Nubian textiles from Qasr el-Yahud, 9th century AD," in *Textiles, Tools and Techniques of the 1st Millennium AD from Egypt and Neighbouring Countries*, eds. Antoine De Moor *et al.* (Tielt, 2015), p. 58.

13   Watson's *Agricultural Innovation* was met critical reviews at the time, including: Jeremy Johns, "A Green Revolution?' *Agricultural Innovation in the Islamic World: The Diffusion of Crops and Farming Techniques, 700–1100* By Andrew Watson," *The Journal of African History*, 25:3 (1984), p 343. It was also considered in relation to Nubian archaeobotanic evidence in: Peter Rowley-Conwy, "Nubia AD 0-550 and the 'Islamic' Agricultural Revolution: Preliminary Botanical Evidence from Qasr Ibrim, Egyptian Nubia," *Archeologie du Nil Moyen*, 3 (1989), pp. 131–138.

14   Michael Decker, "Plants and Progress: Rethinking the Islamic Agricultural Revolution," *Journal of World History*, 20:2 (2009), pp. 187–206. Although sorghum was a native African cereal and was being cultivated in Africa from at least the first millennium BC, it was not included in Decker's argument.

was of crop diffusion—not introduction—and technological advancement, an argument articulated by Paolo Squatriti.[15] However, the case of cotton deserves attention, because cotton was not only occasionally found outside of India in the Roman period. Indeed, cotton was being grown at varying scales in Nubia, the Egyptian Oases, and parts of North Africa by the early first millennium AD,[16] all using irrigation techniques cited by Watson as being part of the agricultural revolution.[17] In addition, evidence increasingly shows cotton being traded from these areas as its use gradually moved westward.[18] In the east, finds of seeds indicated cotton was being grown in Merv in modern day Turkmenistan by the third century AD,[19] Gurukly Depe, also in Turkmenistan, from the sixth to seventh centuries,[20] Kara-tepe in north-western Uzbekistan from the fourth to sixth centuries,[21] and the coasts of Arabia from the first millennium BC.[22]

15   Paolo Squatriti, "Of Seeds, Seasons, and Seas: Andrew Watson's Medieval Agrarian Revo-
      lution Forty Years Later," *The Journal of Economic History*, 74:4 (2014), p. 1210.
16   The earliest evidence of cotton cultivation in Africa comes from Nubia. For an overview
      of all sites in Africa where cotton has been found and bibliography, see: Charlène
      Bouchaud *et al.*, "Cottoning on to Cotton (*Gossypium* spp.) in Arabia and Africa during
      Antiquity," in *Plants and People in the African Past: Themes and Objectives of Archaeobota-
      ny*, eds. Anna Maria Mercuri *et al.* (New York, 2018), pp. 380–426. However, I disagree with
      the conclusions which rely heavily on narratives of trade with India.
17   In particular, the *qanat*, found in both the Libyan and Egyptian oases, was in use in Africa
      by the Roman period. For a summary of the diffusion of ancient irrigation technologies,
      see: Andrew Wilson, "Classical water technology in the early Islamic world," in *Technolo-
      gy, Ideology, Water: From Frontinus to the Renaissance and Beyond*, eds. Christer Bruun and
      Ari Saastamoinen (Rome, 2003); and Andrew Wilson, "The Spread of Foggara-based Irri-
      gation in the Ancient Sahara," in *The Libyan Desert: Natural Resources and Cultural Heri-
      tage*, eds. David Mattingly *et al.* (London, 2006).
18   For a discussion of these networks, see: Anna Kelley, "Movement and Mobility: Cotton
      and the Visibility of Trade Networks Across the Saharan Desert," in *Global Byzantium*, eds.
      Leslie Brubaker *et al.* (London, forthcoming).
19   See the excavation reports of the International Merv Project, in particular: Georgina Her-
      rmann and Kakamurad Kurbansakhatov, "The International Merv Project: Preliminary
      Report on the Third Season (1994)," *Iran*, 33 (1995), pp. 31–60.
20   Dominika Kossowska-Janik, "Cotton and Wool: Textile Economy in the Serakhs Oasis dur-
      ing the Late Sasanian Period, the Case of the Spindle Whorls from Gurukly Depe (Turk-
      menistan)," *Ethnobiology Letters*, 7:1 (2016), p. 107.
21   Elizabeth Brite and John Marston, "Environmental Change, Agricultural Innovation, and
      the Spread of Cotton Agriculture in the Old World," *Journal of Anthropological Archaeol-
      ogy*, 32:1 (2013), p. 40.
22   Archaeological excavations have confirmed the report by Theophrastus, repeated by
      Pliny, that cotton was being grown on Tylos (Bahrain) by the fourth century. Theophras-
      tus, *Historia Plantarum* 4.7–8; Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 12.21. Archaeological evidence of
      cotton in Arabia is summarised in Boucahud *et al.*, "Cottoning onto Cotton."

The diffusion of cotton (and necessary irrigation technologies), therefore, was well underway by the eighth century, with multiple origins.

There are two species of domesticated Old-World cotton—*Gossypium herbaceum* and *Gossypium arboreum*. Because the earliest evidence of cotton cultivation was found in the area of Baluchistan in modern Pakistan,[23] it had been speculated that domestication of wild cotton occurred on the Indian subcontinent.[24] More recently, however, it was proposed that based on current distributions of the species and wild variants, *G. herbaceum* originated in Africa and *G. arboreum* on the Indian subcontinent.[25] Subsequent DNA sequencing has resulted in two particularly interesting findings that support this assertion. First, differences in the genome of the two species indicates that they diverged prior to domestication, meaning there were two separate domestication events for the two species, likely one in Africa and one on the subcontinent.[26] Second, testing performed on cotton fragments from the Nubian site of Qasr Ibrim, the source of substantial evidence of cotton cultivation and production in the Roman period, shows that the cotton being grown in ancient Nubia was *G. herbaceum*, not *G. arboreum*.[27] In other words, the people of Qasr Ibrim were growing domesticated African cotton, not the Indian species.[28] Tracing the evidence of the diffusion of cotton from Nubia through Egypt and Africa therefore suggests that it was the result of movement along local African networks, separate from the Indian Ocean trade routes transporting Indian cotton.[29]

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23 Christophe Moulherat *et al.*, "First Evidence of Cotton at Neolithic Mehrgarh, Pakistan: Analysis of Mineralized Fibres from a Copper Bead," *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 29:12 (2002), pp. 1393–1401.

24 A summary of the development of this line of thinking can be found in Colleen Kriger, "Mapping the History of Cotton Textile Production in Precolonial West Africa," *African Economic History*, 33 (2005), pp. 89–90.

25 Jonathan Wendel *et al.*, "The Origin and Evolution of *Gossypium*," in *Physiology of Cotton*, eds. James Stewart *et al.* (Dordrecht, 2010), pp. 15–16.

26 Simon Renny-Byfield *et al.*, "Independent Domestication of Two Old World Cotton Species," *Genome Biology and Evolution*, 8:6 (2016), pp. 1940–1947.

27 Sarah Palmer *et al.*, "Archaeogenomic Evidence of Punctuation Genome Evolution in *Gossypium*," *Molecular Biology and Evolution*, 29:8 (2012), pp. 2031–2038.

28 It is not known where cotton in Africa was first domesticated, but the only wild variant of *G. herbaceum* is found in southern Africa. Much of sub-Saharan Africa remains unexplored by archaeologists, so it is likely that evidence of the early domestication and cultivation of cotton there has not yet been discovered.

29 The origin of Central Asian and Arabian cotton is beyond the scope of this paper, but the presence of two distinct cotton networks means it should not automatically be assumed to have diffused from India.

4 Case Study: Egypt

Despite this evidence, there continues to be a tendency to associate increases in archaeological cotton finds as the centuries progressed with an expansion of trade with India. To examine this argument, two areas often central to discussions of cotton will be explored: Egypt, for its central role as an intermediary between the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean, and the Levant, where there is clear evidence for the process of the adoption of cotton. Comparison between these two regions is illuminating for what the evidence shows about local cotton networks and how it became popular as a commodity. Unlike in the Levant, the progression of cotton use in Egypt does not appear to be as straight forward. This is partially due to the way in which many sites in Egypt were excavated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When textiles were found during these excavations, undecorated fragments were often discarded potentially skewing our understanding of fibre use, and the excavations themselves were largely uncontrolled increasing the possibility of contamination amongst the finds.[30] It can also be difficult to identify plant fibres after they have been spun into yarns without microscopic examination.[31] This has resulted in inconsistent evidence with large chronological gaps that are continuing to be filled, resulting in new appraisals of both textile production and trade. And what is increasingly becoming clear is that while cotton cultivation in Egypt is the result of African communication networks, textiles found there from throughout the first millennium are the product of multiple networks.

As discussed, cotton was being cultivated and used in Egypt long before the spread of Islam and Watson's "agricultural revolution." However, its evidence is not evenly distributed throughout the region. While cotton textiles have been found at the major port cities of Myos Hormos and Berenike on the Red Sea (both established in the third century BC and largely abandoned in the early fourth and early sixth centuries respectively),[32] the slightly inland fort of Abu Sha'ar (occupied from the fourth through seventh centuries),[33]

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30   Thelma Thomas, "Coptic and Byzantine Textiles Found in Egypt: Corpora, Collections, and Scholarly Perspectives,'" in *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300–700*, ed. Roger Bagnall (Cambridge, 2007), p. 141.

31   Cotton fibres have a characteristic twisted and convoluted structure that makes identification using microscopy straightforward.

32   Myos Hormos was re-established in the thirteenth century as the port Quseir al-Qadim.

33   Lise Bender Jørgensen, "The Late Roman Fort at Abu Sha'ar, Egypt: Textiles in their Archaeological Context," in *Textiles in Situ: Their Find Spots in Egypt and Neighbouring Countries in the First Millennium CE*, ed. Sabine Schrenk (Riggisberg, 2006), pp. 161–174.

and the Western Desert, where seeds also indicate it was being cultivated, finds from the Nile Valley are rare. This could partly be an issue of misidentification of textiles from earlier excavations, but recent re-examinations of textile assemblages from early excavations have not revealed great numbers of cotton textiles. For example, a study of the textiles from Karanis in the Fayuum held at the Bolton Museum (from excavations carried out by the University of Michigan in the 1920s and gifted by the Kelsey Museum) found two fragments out of 300 that had been identified as wool but were actually mixes of cotton and wool. While it is likely that there are also misidentified cotton fragments held in the main collection at the Kelsey Museum, it would likely represent an equally small percentage of the overall assemblage.[34] Similarly, analysis of 468 late antique textiles also from the Fayuum at the Museum für Spatantike und Byzantinische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz found no examples of cotton, even in those described as "suspicious."[35]

Cotton is found in equally small percentages at sites more recently or currently under excavation. All indications therefore suggest that it was not widely used in this time period in the Nile Valley, calling into question the assertion that cotton was highly sought after.[36] The geographic separation between the two regions where cotton has been found supports the multiple network theory of cotton transmission in Africa.[37] The finds from the Red Sea ports contained high proportions of Z-spun cotton, which combined with finds of other Indian trade goods and texts describing Indian Ocean trade, demonstrate a sustained trade relationship.[38] The sites in the Western Desert were on established routes connecting them to Nubia, along which its cultivation spread.[39]

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34   Jane Batcheller, *Late Roman Textiles from Karanis, Egypt: An Investigation into the Characterization of Archaeological Textiles* (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2002), p. 107.

35   Petra Linscheid, "Late Antique to Early Islamic Textiles from Egypt," *Textile History*, 32:1 (2001), p. 75.

36   For example, this is the basis for the argument in Bouchaud *et al.*, "Cottoning on to Cotton," which proposes that imports from India spurred demand which in turn stimulated local cultivation. Cotton also appears rarely in the documents, but the *Periplous of the Erythraean Sea* is often cited as proof of Roman demand for cotton. However, issues of the veracity of the text, detailed in Rebecca Darley, *Indo-Byzantine Exchange, 4th to 7th Centuries: A Global History*, (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2013), pp. 125–156, complicate many of the assumptions textile historians have made based on the text.

37   For a discussion of these networks, see Kelley, "Movement and Mobility"

38   Wild *et al.* "Roman Cotton Revisited."

39   Alan Roe, "The Old 'Darb al Arbein' Caravan Route and Kharga Oasis in Antiquity," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 42 (2005/2006), pp. 199–129.

In the absence of evidence for widespread cotton demand, it is plausible that cotton in each of these networks functioned in different markets.

Following the abandonment of the Red Sea ports as Red Sea trade decreased, and the contraction of towns in the Western Desert in the fifth century,[40] there is a gap in definitive finds of cotton until after Egypt was incorporated into the Islamic world. When cotton assemblages are found, they again suggest that there were multiple cotton networks functioning in Egypt. For example, excavations at one of the cemeteries of Fustat, 'Ayn al-Sira, dating to the second half of the eighth century to the early ninth century, yielded a number of bodies which had raw cotton around the necks and pelvis area; the rest of the textiles found were linen.[41] The excavators proposed that the sheer amount of raw cotton present in the cemetery indicated local cultivation rather than the import of foreign material.[42] While it seems unlikely cotton cultivation was taking place in the Nile Valley, due to the agricultural practices necessitated by the inundation cycle of the river and a complete absence of evidence of cultivation until many centuries later, it is possible there was a revival of cotton cultivation in the oases of the Western Desert, or that it came from elsewhere in Africa.

This conclusion diverges from the predominant assertion that cotton in Egypt in the early Islamic period evidenced increased trade with India, first proposed in the 1930s when Rodolphe Pfister noted similarities between printed cottons found in Egypt and Indian art.[43] There are several large collections of such textiles held in museums throughout the world, the largest of which is at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, with over 1,200 fragments.[44] At first the printed cottons were dated based on stylistic comparison to the twelfth/thirteenth centuries and later, the period when there seemed to have been a resurgence of trade between India and Egypt along Red Sea routes under the Mamluks.[45] However, radiocarbon dating on a selection of the Ashmolean

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40   Various reasons have been put forth for the depopulation of the towns of the Western Desert. Kelley, "Movement and Mobility."

41   Roland-Pierre Gayraud *et al.*, "Istabl 'Antar (Fostat) 1992. Rapport de fouilles," *Annales Islamologiques*, (1994), pp. 11–12

42   Gayraud *et al.*, "Istabl 'Antar," p.12.

43   Rodolphe Pfister, "Tissus imprimés de l'Inde Médiévale," *Revue des art asiatiques*, 10 (1936), pp. 161–164, and Rodolphe Pfister, *Les toiles imprimées de Fostat et l'Hindoustan* (Paris, 1938); Ruth Barnes, "Indian Cotton for Cairo: The Royal Ontario Museum's Gujarati Textiles and the Early Western Indian Ocean Trade," *Textile History*, 48:1 (2017), p. 22.

44   This collection was the subject of an in-depth study by Ruth Barnes in the early 1990s. Ruth Barnes, *Indian Block-Printed Textiles in Egypt: the Newberry Collection in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Vol. 1: Text* (Oxford, 1997).

45   Excavations of the second period of occupation of Quseir al-Qadim (Myos Hormos) by the University of Chicago in the 1970s and 1980s recovered thirteenth-fifteenth-century

textiles has indicated that some of these were actually produced in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and a few from as early as the eighth and ninth centuries.[46] There was a period of intensification of Red Sea trade undertaken by the Fatimids in Egypt in the tenth and eleventh centuries,[47] suggesting that it is possible these textiles were either the result of direct trade between Red Sea and Indian Ocean communities (including those of East Africa and Arabia, discussed shortly). The earlier examples could represent an initial phase of this trade expansion. But these textiles could also represent a mix of trade and imitation in local production. Studies of medieval textile assemblages elsewhere in the world have demonstrated that the movement of textiles and frequency of motif imitation throughout Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Central Asian regions makes attribution of origin based on iconography alone difficult, as has been conclusively demonstrated by several studies of silk textiles.[48] While there is no conclusive evidence of block-printing in Egypt in this time-period, resist-dye was a technique used in Egypt from at least the fourth century, demonstrated by a group of resist-dyed linen textiles from Egyptian cemeteries held in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.[49] So while it is likely that a high proportion of these textiles come from India, it does not follow that they all do.

coins and a further sixty-nine fragments of "Indian printed" cotton fragments, taken to indicate an expansion of trade links with India by way of Red Sea routes. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, *Resist Dyed Textiles from Quseir al-Qadim, Egypt* (Paris, 1990); Katherine Burke and Donald Whitcomb, "Quseir al-Qadim in the Thirteenth Century: A Community and its Textiles," *Ars Orientalis*, 34 (2004), pp. 82–97.

46 Barnes, *Indian Block-Printed Textiles*, pp. 33–34, 39–40; Thomas Higham *et. al.*, "Radiocarbon Dates from the Oxford AMS System: Archaeometry Datelist 32" *Archaeometry*, 49 (2007), pp. S41–S44.

47 Timothy Power, *The Red Sea from Byzantium to the Caliphate, AD 500–1000* (Cairo, 2012), pp. 146–174, esp. 152–154 for the importance of textiles.

48 Galliker, "Middle Byzantine Silk"; Thelma Thomas, "'Ornaments of Excellence' from 'the Miserable Gains of Commerce': Luxury Art and Byzantine Culture," in *Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition 7th–9th Century*, eds. Helen Evans and Brandie Ratliff (New York, 2012), pp. 125, 127–129; David Jacoby, "Silk in Western Byzantium before the Fourth Crusade," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 84/85 (1991), p. 459; David Jacoby, "Silk Economics and Cross-Cultural Artistic Interaction: Byzantium, the Muslim World, and the Christian West," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004), p. 214. It is reasonable that the same would be true with other fibre types.

49 References are also made to smaller collections held by the Louvre, Cluny Museum, Abegg Foundation and Royal Museums in Brussels. Linda Wooley, "Medieval Mediterranean Textiles in the Victoria and Albert Museum: Resist Dyed Linens from Egypt Dating from the Fourth to the Seventh Centuries A.D." *Textile History*, 32:1 (2001), pp. 106–113.

5   Cotton Cultivation across Africa after the Spread of Islam

The Cairo Genizah, a collection of several hundred thousand letters, wills, dowry lists, legal complaints, etc., from the Jewish community of Fustat (Old Cairo), is one of the most comprehensive sources scholars have detailing mercantile activity in early Islamic Egypt. These documents had been deposited in the storeroom (*genizah*) of the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo from the early ninth to mid-nineteenth centuries. While projects are currently underway to create a comprehensive database of all the documents (held in libraries across the world) many were analysed by Shlomo Goitein for his six-volume series *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza* (1967–1993). In the texts studied, many relating to the merchants within the community, there were mentions of textiles imported from India, referred to as *mihbas* (plural *mahabis*) which Goitein translated as "wrapper" and assumed to have been cotton, as well as cotton itself.[50] However, India is not the only location recorded as exporting cotton to Egypt. The documents also show raw cotton being imported from Tunisia and Syria in the later periods,[51] as well as *balad al-rūm*, the land of the Romans, thought to refer to Sicily.[52]

These other cotton centres have received less attention than the Indian Ocean but are increasingly being corroborated by archaeological excavation. At the Idrisid city of Volubilis in modern Morocco, large deposits of cotton seeds have been discovered in the ninth-century levels of the city.[53] Cotton seeds and spindle whorls have been uncovered from excavations at Dia in the Niger Delta of Mali, suggesting local cultivation and processing was taking place from at least the eleventh century.[54] More cotton seeds have also been found in eleventh-century contexts from elsewhere in Mali.[55] While the spread

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50   Shlomo Dov Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: the Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza. Vol. 4 Daily Life* (Berkeley, 1983), p. 171.

51   Shlomo Dov Goitein, "The Main Industries of the Mediterranean Area as Reflected in the Record of the Cairo Geniza," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 4:2 (1961), p. 179.

52   Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, p. 404.

53   Ruth Pelling, "Patterns in the Archaeobotany of Africa: Developing a Database for North Africa, the Sahara, and the Sahel" in *Archaeology of African Plant Use*, eds. Chris Stevens *et al.* (Walnut Creek, 2014), p. 206.

54   Shawn Murray, "Medieval Cotton and Wheat Finds in the Middle Niger Delta (Mali)," in *Fields of Change: Progress in African Archaeobotany*, ed. René Cappers (Groningen, 2007), pp. 45–48.

55   Rogier Bedaux, "The Tellem Research Project: the Archaeological Context," in *Tellem Textiles: Archaeological Finds from the Caves in Mali's Bandiagara Cliff*, ed. Rita Bolland

of cotton cultivation in these areas was commonly described as a result of increasing contact with Arab traders, the spread of cotton from Nubia to the Western Desert and Fezzan in Libya in late antiquity offers an alternative earlier possibility for diffusion; further study is required to determine the exact chronology. Two cotton seeds were also found at the re-established Red Sea port of Quseir al Qadim (Myos Hormos) in contexts dating to the mid-eleventh to twelfth centuries, indicating either local cultivation or, more likely, accidental inclusion in cotton padding (as in a saddle);[56] this is possibly from India or the Arabian Red Sea Coast, where cotton cultivation began in at least the first century. Regardless, the evidence of the transmission of cotton in Egypt shows rather than representing a large-scale change in the textile culture of Egypt characterised by diffusion from a single origin, cotton was circulating on multiple networks throughout the first millennium.

6   Case Study: The Levant

In the Levant the appearance of cotton represents a more radical change. One of the earliest sites with notable textile assemblages is an urban dwelling and workshop at Masada in modern Jordan. Dating from the first century BC to first century AD, excavations showed the predominance of wool within the region, with proportionally very few linen or goat-hair textiles and only a single cotton fragment that excavators determined was likely a modern intrusion.[57] At the cemetery of Khirbet Qazone, also located in modern Jordan and used from the first to third centuries, the majority of the textiles excavated were wool; the only cotton garment recovered was a child's tunic.[58] At the Cave of Letters, again in Jordan, containing nineteen tombs from the first to second centuries, most of the textiles were wool without a single cotton fragment.[59] At the fourth-century site of Rogem Zafir in modern Israel, only one fragment was

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(Amsterdam, 1991); Bruno Chavane, *Villages de l'Ancien Tekrour: Recherches archéologiques dans la moyenne vallée du fleuve Sénégal* (Paris, 1985).

56   Marijke van der Veen *et al.*, *Consumption, Trade and Innovation: Exploring the Botanical Remains from the Roman and Islamic Ports at Quseir al-Qadim* (Frankfurt, 2011), pp. 89–90.

57   Avigail Sheffer and Hero Granger-Taylor, *Textiles from Masada: A Preliminary Selection*, (Jerusalem, 1994), p. 160.

58   Hero Granger-Taylor, "Textiles from Khirbet Qazone and the Cave of Letters, Two Burial Sites Near the Dead Sea: Similarities and Differences in Find Spots and Textile Types," in *Textiles in Situ: Their Find Spots in Egypt and Neighbouring Countries in the First Millennium CE*, ed. Sabine Schrenk (Riggisberg, 2006), pp. 121–127.

59   Granger-Taylor, "Textiles from Khirbet Qazone," p. 127.

identified as cotton, with wool slightly outnumbering linen fragments in the remaining assemblage.[60] At all of these sites, wool was the dominant fibre type with a notable presence of linen and only a rare inclusion of cotton. This began to shift in the seventh and eighth centuries.

At En-Boqeq in Israel, excavations under a destruction layer of a Byzantine fort, dated to the first half of the seventh century, showed that while wool was still the dominant textile type, with eighty fragments recovered, the recovery of fourteen cotton fragments indicated a greater use of cotton compared to pre-seventh-century sites.[61] Finds at later sites confirm that cotton use continued to increase through the seventh century. At Deir 'Ain 'Abata, a late seventh to early eighth-century monastic outpost, cotton was the principal fibre type identified followed closely by linen; wool and animal hair made up only a small proportion of the assemblage.[62] At Nessana in modern Palestine, the textiles recovered from the ruins of a seventh-century Byzantine house revealed linen as the dominant fibre type, with a smaller proportion of cotton, and even less wool.[63] The middens of the habitation site Nahal 'Omer in modern Israel, dating from the mid seventh to early ninth century, also revealed a large shift to cotton which made up over half of the assemblage.[64] The Qarantal Cave 38, a storage cave from Israel from the ninth to thirteenth centuries, also contained a large number of textiles, of which cotton was the largest single fibre type, followed closely by linen and linen/cotton mixes; wool made up less than five percentage the total assemblage.[65]

There is also a site that appears to confirm a diffused use of cotton in this time period. Qasr el-Yahud is an eighth- to ninth-century mass gravesite near the monastery of John the Baptist near the Jordan River, the traditional site where the "washing of the lepers" took place, and the skeletons recovered from the site all show signs of leprosy and tuberculosis.[66] While there is no record of a hospital at the monastery, the high incidence of disease associated with the

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60   Orit Shamir, "Byzantine and Early Islamic Textiles Excavated in Israel," *Textile History*, 32:1 (2001), p. 93.

61   Avigail Sheffer and Amalia Tidhar (trans. Hero Granger-Taylor), "The Textiles from the 'En-Boqeq Excavation in Israel," *Textile History*, 22:1 (1991), pp. 3–46

62   Hero Granger-Taylor, "The Textiles," in *Sanctuary of Lot at Deir 'Ain 'Abata in Jordan Excavations 1988–2003*, ed. Konstantinos Politis (Amman, 2012).

63   Bellinger, "Textiles," p. 92.

64   Shamir, "Byzantine and Early Islamic Textiles," p. 99.

65   Orit Shamir and Alisa Baginski, "Textiles' Treasure from Jericho Cave 38 in the Qarantal Cliff Compound to other Early Medieval Sites in Israel," *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings*, 742 (2012), pp. 1–11.

66   Shamir, "Egyptian and Nubian," p. 49.

bodies suggests that the individuals were seeking healing in the Jordan River.[67] Of the two hundred and fifty textiles that were recovered, one hundred and seventy-six were linen and eighty-four were cotton; there was no wool identified.[68] The high incidence of linen and cotton, as well as the concentration of ill individuals indicated to excavators that many were not local,[69] and suggests a wider distribution of cotton throughout the Mediterranean and surrounding area.

The use of cotton in Egypt and the Levant therefore seem to represent different processes. While the evidence from the Levant shows cotton increasingly rivaling wool (and then linen) as the dominant fibre, in Egypt linen remained the most used fibre, despite increases in the presence of cotton. The reasons for the adoption of cotton are still debated, but in both late antique papyri and later Byzantine texts, cotton is not portrayed as a high status fibre.[70] The relative ease with which cotton could be dyed may have made cotton a more attractive fibre choice, especially when compared to linen which was difficult to dye, and even with the use of strong mordant to affix pigment could not achieve the range and saturation of colour that wool or cotton could.[71] The clothing preferences of the Arabs, early adopters of cotton for ordinary daily use, could have also impacted the clothing choices as people sought to emulate the Arab émigrés.[72]

Yet none of this explains why cotton had a greater impact on the Levant than it did in Egypt. One possible explanation is that if trade with India was not as important as previously thought to the adoption of cotton, proximity to high volume cotton production may have meant cotton was more readily available in the Levant. In Egypt, cotton was being imported from West and North

67   Shamir, "Byzantine and Early Islamic Textiles," p. 100.

68   Shamir, "Egyptian and Nubian," p. 52–54.

69   Shamir, "Byzantine and Early Islamic Textiles," pp. 100–101; Shamir, "Egyptian and Nubian," p. 58.

70   SB 6.9026 is a second century letter, found in Oxyrhynchos, from a woman to her brother requesting cotton thread to be woven into garments to be worn in the fields, indicating cotton was for utilitarian use. Roger Bagnall and Raffaella Cribiore, *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt, 300 BC–AD 800* (Ann Arbor, 2006). In the late ninth-tenth-century *Book of the Eparch*, Chapter 9 records that linen merchants were allowed to produce linings from cotton (βαμβακίνων). *Das Eparchenbuch Leons des Weisen* (*Book of the Eparch*), ed. Johannes Koder (Vienna, 1991), 9.1.423–424.

71   Andrea Kirstein, "Materials and Techniques," in *Weavings from Roman, Byzantine and Islamic Egypt: The Rich Life and the Dance*, ed. Eunice Maguire (Urbana-Champaign, 1999), p. 14.

72   Richard Bulliet, *Cotton, Climate and Camels in Early Islamic Iran: A Moment in World History* (New York, 2009), p. 51.

Africa, as well as Nubia (though Nubian cotton production began to decline around the fifth century) and various locations on the Indian Ocean including Arabia, but the scale of cultivation and trade in these areas is unclear and requires further archaeological inquiry. Egyptians may have also been cultivating cotton themselves or importing it from Syria/Palestine and Sicily in the later periods, but the evidence of this is limited.[73] However, the Levant, in addition to also being within the trading spheres of the afore mentioned cotton production areas, was connected via land trade routes to a centre going through a period of intensive cotton cultivation: the Iranian plateau.

7   A "Cotton Boom" on the Iranian Plateau

Richard Bulliet was the first to identify what he termed a "cotton boom" on the Iranian plateau, part of a restructuring of agricultural output beginning in the eighth century and reaching its apex in the ninth and tenth centuries. By looking at a combination of tax documents, geographies, personal notices and archaeological excavation, Bulliet determined that an influx of immigrants in the period directly following the collapse of Sasanian rule resulted in a redevelopment of agricultural land for the purpose of creating an export market. Cotton was the primary crop of this restructuring, and led the Iranian plateau to become one of the most productive regions within the Middle East; climatic cooling in the eleventh century and the incursion of Turkic nomadic immigrants that followed meant the cotton boom was short lived.[74] But while it lasted there was a source of cotton that was closer to the Levant than India, and it is worth exploring its possible role in expanding cotton use.

As previously discussed, before the Islamic period, cotton was grown in Central Asia, primarily in the urban centres east of the Iranian plateau, such as Merv, that were near rivers which could provide the irrigation necessary for cotton cultivation. However, this was of limited external commercial importance, and the evidence does not indicate that there was the infrastructure for large-scale production or trade.[75] In the plateau, there is little evidence of

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73   There also seems to have been a cultural predisposition to linen that meant there was less of a market for cotton.

74   Bulliet, *Cotton*, p. 1.

75   Charlène Bouchaud *et al.*, "Cotton Cultivation and Textile Production in the Arabian Peninsula during Antiquity; the evidence from Madâ'in Salih (Saudi Arabia) and Qal'at al-Bahrain (Bahrain)," *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany*, 20 (2011), p. 415; Thomas Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 68.

cotton cultivation prior to the seventh century, and excavation has revealed few cotton textile remains.[76] According to Bulliet, after the seventh century, increased immigration from the Arabian Peninsula led to increasing investment in *qanats*, irrigation channels that drew water from underground aquifers, in areas of uncultivated land in arid areas specifically for cotton cultivation.[77] These Persian innovations were in use from the first millennium BC, but were greatly expanded in the early Islamic period.[78] This corresponds to an increase in documented textile merchants specialising in cotton, and ninth-century geographers list Nishapur, Rayy and Isfahan, the three largest cities of northern Iran, as cotton production centres.[79] Tax schedules and documents also indicate that cotton had higher returns for export, taxed at two and a half times the rate of wheat.[80] So it was financially advantageous to develop previously unused land for cotton cultivation specifically to take advantage of the export market.

Cotton production in Yemen was closely linked to this development. Increasingly Yemen appears to have been a source of cotton exported throughout the Mediterranean region; striped *ikat* textiles with inscriptions indicating dates from the ninth to tenth centuries from Yemen have been found in both Egypt and the Levant,[81] indicates that cotton was cultivated in the area and textiles were being produced there, again, independently from trade with India. Although as mentioned, there is little evidence at the moment to quantify the scale. Bulliet speculates that it was immigrants from Yemen who began the push for cotton cultivation in the Iranian plateau in an effort to derive profits from previously uncultivated lands.[82] So while the development of cotton cultivation in these areas and its use throughout the Mediterranean fits the timeline of Watson's argument, the evidence suggests that India was playing a secondary role, a later step in a process that was already well under way. As cotton

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76   Trudy Kawami, "Archaeological Evidence for Textiles in Pre-Islamic Iran," *Iranian Studies*, 25:1/2 (1992), pp. 7–18; Bulliet, *Cotton*, pp. 5–6.

77   Bulliet, *Cotton*, pp. 37–40.

78   Decker, "Plants and Progress," pp. 190–191.

79   Bulliet, *Cotton*, p. 4–5, 42.

80   Bulliet, *Cotton*, pp. 34–37.

81   Alfred Bühler, *Ikat Batik Plangi* (Basel, 1972); Lisa Golombek and Veronika Gervers, "Tiraz Fabrics in the Royal Ontario Museum," in *Studies in Textile History: In Memory of Harold B. Burnham* ed. Veronika Gervers (Toronto, 1977); Orit Shamir and Alisa Baginski, "The Earliest Cotton Ikat Textiles from Nahal 'Omer Israel 650–810 CE," in *Global Textile Encounters*, eds. Marie-Louise Nosch, Zhaou Feng and Lotika Varadarajan (Oxford, 2014); Carol Bier, "Inscribed Cotton Ikat from Yemen in the Tenth Century CE," in *Resist Dye on the Silk Road: Shibori, Clamp Resist and Ikat.* ed. Ameersing Luximon (Hangzhou, 2014).

82   Bulliet, *Cotton*, pp. 28, 41.

had been grown in the areas around the plateau pre-Islam, the new immigrants were not responsible so much for the diffusion of the crop into Central Asia, but for aggressive expansion of land exploitation.

None of this is to say that cotton was never exported from India through long-distance trade networks. But what becomes clear from a re-analysis of the evidence of cotton use and cultivation from the first millennium is that cotton was already being widely distributed through a series of overlapping regional trade networks prior to the spread of Islam. Indian cotton was therefore not a driving force in the increased cultivation and production of cotton from the seventh and eighth centuries on. Instead, increases in cotton use and its transmission throughout the Mediterranean was fed by increased regional production and a change in the circulation of trade goods within economic systems.

8   Conclusion: Crop Diffusion vs. Economic Consolidation

In the centuries before the spread of Islam, it is clear the nature of long-distance trade was already changing. There were established trade routes between the Sasanian and Byzantine Empires in the first part of the first millennium AD, but the rivalry between the two empires intensified in the sixth and seventh centuries, as demonstrated by the sixth-century *Codex Justinianus* which stated that both Roman and Persian merchants were required to trade in designated areas in a highly regimented system.[83] These areas could also charge heavy tariffs and tolls, sometimes as high as ten per cent, making trade centres that were not under Persian or Byzantine control, such as the Arabian coast, more attractive.[84] This made them a diffusion point for cotton coming from both Africa, via the Red Sea, and India, via the Persian Gulf and Bahrain. The question of diffusion, especially in relation to the two, different, species of Old-World cotton, is one that will only be fully resolved by further DNA testing of archaeological samples. But for now, it is plausible to argue that cotton was moving along both of these networks from Arabia into the rest of the Middle East and beyond, and it was clearly doing so long before the spread of Islam.

These shifts in long-distance trade networks had an impact on local economies as well. As Chris Wickham has shown using archaeological ceramic evidence, there was increasing localisation of the economy throughout both

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83   *The Codex of Justinian*, ed. Bruce Frier, tr. Fred Blumes (Cambridge, 2016), 4.63–64.

84   Touraj Daryaee, "Bazaars, Merchants, and Trade in Late Antique Iran," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 30:3 (2010), p. 409.

Egypt and the Levant in this period,[85] and there ceased to be strong trade connections between the two.[86] This localisation of the economy persisted throughout the sixth century, but the recentralisation of economic structures, which began under the Umayyads but accelerated under the Abbasids, saw a further increase in overlapping inter-regional trade networks that resulted in regional commodity exchange.[87] This meant that cotton, which had previously been diffused by way of its cultivation, was increasingly entering markets as a finished commodity and was available farther from its production sites.[88] The recentralisation under a principal authority in Baghdad corresponds to the increase in cotton use in the Levant, attested to in the archaeological record, evidence of large-scale investment in cotton cultivation in the Iranian Plateau, and increasing cotton finds across Egypt, although not nearly on the same scale as in the Levant. The centralisation of the economy of the Islamic lands under the Abbasids brought commodities that had been diffusing along disparate networks across the new Caliphate into the same wider network. For textiles, this meant potentially offering alternative, and closer, sources of cotton which were not involved with external Indian trade networks.

Cotton was not only an Islamic phenomenon, but the fact that the areas where textiles are preserved from this time period were early Islamic conquests makes their prominence in discussions of cotton a necessity. However, there is evidence that cotton was being used throughout the Mediterranean, eventually making its way to Europe. It is mentioned in both the Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies* as well as the *Book of the Eparch*,[89] in which its status as an utilitarian textile may explain its apparent absence from other sources. There was also a thriving cotton industry in Italy by the twelfth century.[90] So while

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85 Chris Wickham, *Framing the Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 759–769 for Egypt, pp. 774–780 for the Levant; Daryaee, "Bazaars," p. 409.

86 Wickham, *Framing*, p. 779.

87 Alan Walmsley, "Economic Developments and the Nature of Settlement in the Towns and Countryside of Syria-Palestine, ca. 565–800," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 61 (2007), pp. 319–321; Fanny Bessard, "The Urban Economy in Southern Inland Greater Syria from the Seventh Century to the End of the Umayyads," in *Local Economies? Production and Exchange of Inland Regions in Late Antiquity*, ed. Luke Lavan (Leiden, 2013), p. 386; Wickham, *Framing*, p. 780.

88 This had of course been true for Indian cotton from late antiquity, but there is little evidence of cotton grown in Africa being produced for a wider export market before the seventh century.

89 *Constantine Porphyrogennetos: Book of Ceremonies*, trs. Ann Moffatt and Maxeme Tall (Canberra, 2012), II 45.678.

90 Mazzaoui, *Italian Cotton*. Mazzaoui relied on the premise that cotton was introduced from India, although by the start of the second millennium Syria was an important source

cotton has historically been associated with the development of Indian trade networks, I would propose it should actually be seen as a commodity functioning within several networks, representing a confluence of global interactions and overlapping circulation of commercial goods. As such, it should not be seen as evidence of increasing trade along Indian Ocean networks, but as an indicator of cultural change and economic consolidation. Cotton as a cultivated cash crop had been transmitted across the parts of Central Asia, the Middle East, Mediterranean and North Africa long before the spread of Islam, and as a commodity circulating along multiple networks, it highlights the complex way in which economic systems of the first millennium were developing.

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